





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

IMMORTALITY:

A POEM,

IN TEN CANTOS.

BY

REV. PHINEHAS ROBINSON, A. M.

11

OF WASHINGTONVILLE, ORANGE CO., N. Y.

O! ye blest scenes of permanent delight,
Full above measure, lasting beyond bound,
A perpetuity of bliss is bliss!
Could you, so rich in rapture, fear an end,
The ghastly thought would drink up all your joys,
And quite unparadise the realms of light!

YOUNG.

NEW-YORK:

LEAVITT, TROW & COMPANY,

191 BROADWAY.

1846.



753
R664
v

ENTERED, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1846, by

PHINEHAS ROBINSON,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New-York.

TO MR. J. M. J. J.
ALBANY, N. Y.

TO THE
FRIENDS OF HAMILTON COLLEGE,

EMBRACING ESPECIALLY HER

TRUSTEES, FACULTY, STUDENTS, PATRONS, AND ALUMNI,

AS A

TESTIMONIAL OF FOND REGARD FOR HIS ALMA MATER,

STRONG CONFIDENCE IN HER ELEVATED CHARACTER

AS A LITERARY INSTITUTION,

AND

LIVELY INTEREST IN HER PROSPERITY AND USEFULNESS,

THIS WORK

IS,

MOST CORDIALLY AND RESPECTFULLY,

Inscribed

BY THE

AUTHOR.

M191897

CONTENTS.

CANTO I.

The Reign of Death,	PAGE. 9
-------------------------------	------------

CANTO II.

The Discussion, ,	47
-----------------------------	----

CANTO III.

The Trial,	89
----------------------	----

CANTO IV.

The Summons,	129
------------------------	-----

CANTO V.

The Victory over Death,	167
-----------------------------------	-----

CANTO VI.

The Surprise,	209
-------------------------	-----

CANTO VII.

The Journey,	243
------------------------	-----

CANTO VIII.

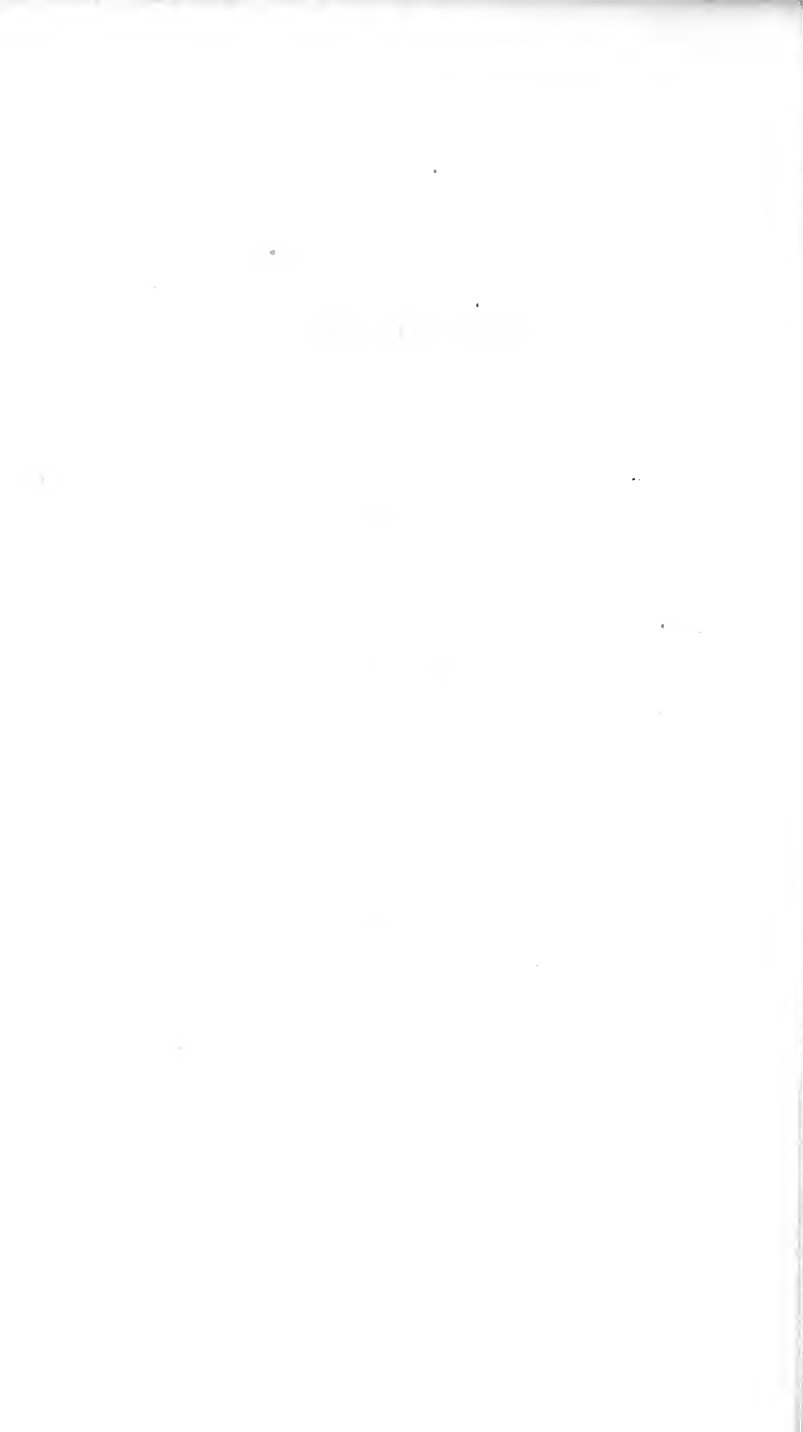
The Skeptic and the Test of Love,	285
---	-----

CANTO IX.

The Happy Meeting,	319
------------------------------	-----

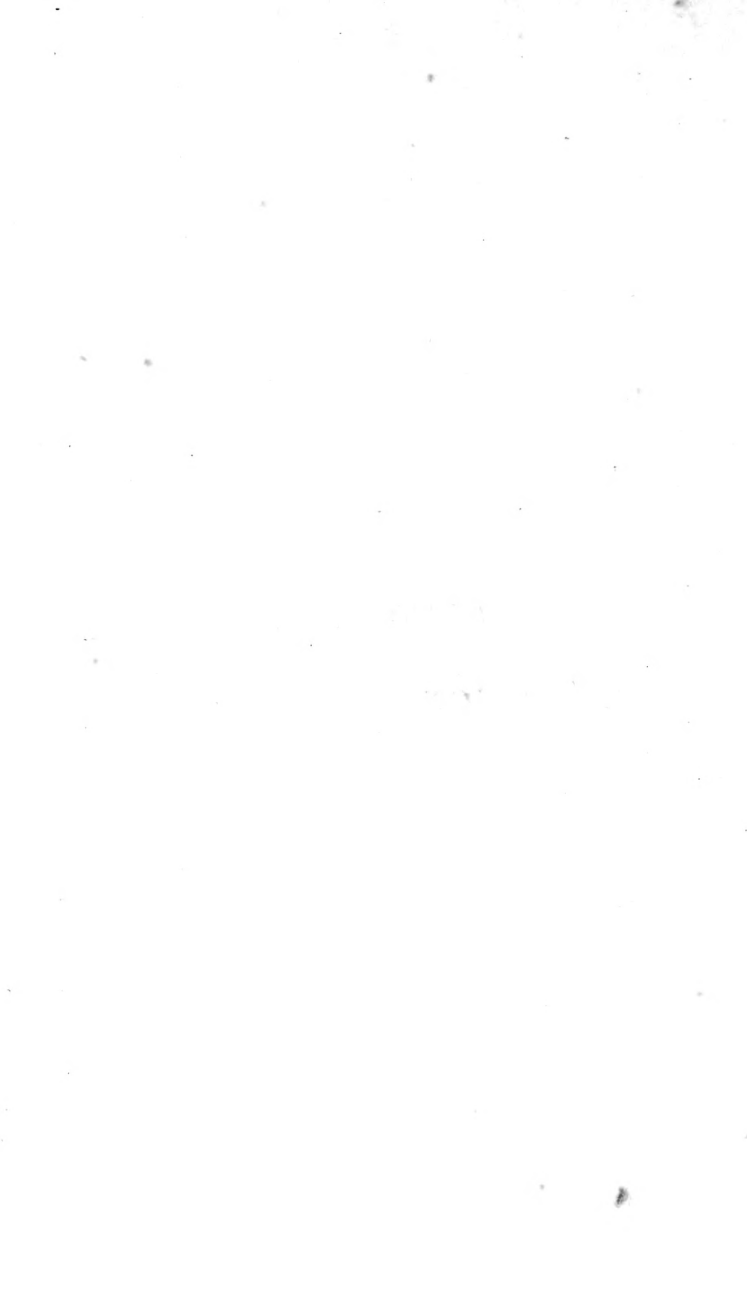
CANTO X.

The Commission,	361
---------------------------	-----



CANTO I.

THE REIGN OF DEATH.



CANTO I.

THE REIGN OF DEATH.

ANALYSIS.

Invocation.—Midnight, after the burial of the Saviour.—Disturbed slumber of Pilate, Caiaphas and others.—Terrific visions of the disciples.—Description of the garden and tomb of Joseph.—Apostrophe to Death, to the Jewish Rulers, and to the scattered Tribes.—Their return to their own land.—The Roman Guards.—Sunrise.—Preternatural solemnity on all the scenes of nature.—Exultation in Hell.—Speech of Satan to the infernal hosts.—Describes his exploits.—Greeted with applause.—His second speech.—Details his plan of operations for the future.—Expedition of the infernal powers to Palestine.—Their various movements.

INVOCATION.

EXHAUSTLESS Source of wisdom, goodness, love,
Great beyond thought, and kind beyond compare,
Stooping to view an angel's flight above,
Yet slighting not the mote that floats in air ;
Atoms minute are not beneath Thy care,
Nor rolling worlds above Thy full control ;
All things alike thy condescension share,—
The senseless clod, the never-dying soul,
Creation's smallest part, and its stupendous whole.

May I not seek Thy favour, and implore
Thy smile to cheer me, and Thy hand to guide ?
The love Thou hast revealed, none can explore,
Of all the ranks that fill creation wide ;

What, since Thine own beloved Son has died,
What gift, what favour, canst thou now withhold,
From those who, fleeing to His bleeding side,
Find pardon—purchased not with gems, or gold ?
O ! then give grace to one who would that love unfold !

I fain would sing of Him who left His throne
In highest Heaven, to robe Himself in clay,
Bear our deep sorrows, for our sins atone,
Lie in the grave, scatter death's gloom away,
And pour upon our path eternal day !
Wilt thou not deign to guide my thoughts aright,
And, breathing on my heart, inspire my lay ?
O ! scatter every cloud that dims my sight ;
Reveal celestial Truth arrayed in Thy own light !

To roll these numbers down the stream of time,
Making sweet music echoed back by Fame,
In thrilling tones pervading every clime,
And wakening homage to a deathless name,
'Twere wrong to wish.—Earth's glory ends in shame !
And yet to kindle admiration high,
For Him who, on love's errand, hither came,
Upheld by Thee I now would fondly try.
O ! let His name be loved, should my own memory die !

I.

O'er the queen city of the chosen race,
Night's sable veil is spread. Sweet, placid sleep,
Like cautious thief, with soft and silent pace,
Has stolen on all ; save that, to wake and weep,
Is still the lot of some ;—oblivion deep
Soothes not the sons of woe. Antonia's tower,
Whose sentinels their constant vigils keep,
Frowns dreadful as the guard of Roman power,
And knows no quiet rest, e'en at this midnight hour.

II.

In gorgeous palace, on his downy bed
Curtained with crimson, Pilate woos repose,
But woos in vain. He sees, with aching head
And trembling heart, Him, whom, alas! he knows,
For his own peace, too well; and whom he chose,
Though conscious of the vileness of the deed,
To yield, while unconvicted, to His foes;
'Tis He, once to the dreadful cross decreed!
And all His cruel wounds do still profusely bleed!

III.

And now the warning he had once received,
From her he loved and trusted;—her, whose tears
Had pleaded for the right, and who had grieved
And suffered much in dreams, from fears
Of threatened injury; her, who, for years,
Had been his sole companion;—now *her* voice
Of solemn warning echoes in his ears.
Alas! deliberate wrong had been his choice;
And who can bid a heart, tortured with guilt, rejoice!

IV.

And sterner passions, with remorse and fear,
Awaken tumult, in the cruel heart
Of Caiaphas. To him, no object dear
That flatters not his pride. Hence, every art
And wily stratagem, the serpent's part,
Unblushingly he plies. E'en at this hour,
While conscious guilt makes him with horror start,
And threatening clouds of vengeance seem to lower,
Stretched on his bed of thorns, he dreams of wealth and power.

V.

Many there are, from whom night's filmy veil
Conceals not their own thoughts. Broken their rest;
Now conscious, dreaming now. Visions assail
Their labouring minds, not such as the behest
Of Heaven bestows upon the pure, the blest,
But such as, formed of images of woe,
Visit the bosom with remorse distressed.
Sudden they start, wherefore they scarcely know,
And, ere they are aware, their tears begin to flow.

VI.

'Neath many a lowly roof, in sad repose,
Guileless, yet friendless, now unknown to fame,
Rest the disciples, whom Messiah chose
To spread, through widest realms, His deathless name.
Their very dreams are sorrowful! The flame
Of Hope, once kindled in their bosoms, dies;
For they had hoped, when He of Bethlehem came,
That fall'n Judea from the dust would rise,
And spread her power through earth, her glory to the skies.

VII.

Yes, they had hoped to grace His regal throne,
To share the honours which should deck His brow,
When all His enemies, by might o'erthrown,
Crushed and subdued, should solemnly avow
Love and obedience to their Lord; but now,
Alas! those visions, once so bright, are fled;
'Neath sorrow's heavy pressure low they bow,
For He, so loved, so honoured once, is dead!
No ray of hope to cheer, is on their pathway shed!

VIII.

In their short, fitful slumbers, scenes appear
Now brightly beautiful, now darkly sad :
Again that potent voice they seem to hear,
Which makes the meek, the lowly sufferer glad,
Restores to tranquil joys demoniacs mad ;
Gives sight to those who never saw before,
Speaks hearing to the deaf, life to the dead,
And, when the angry billows chafe and roar,
Sinks them, in calm repose, along their winding shore.

IX.

Anon, amid far other scenes they stand ;
Anon, with timid step and boding heart,
They follow, hovering near, that ruthless band,
Who tear from them their Master. Loth to part
From One so loved and honoured ; yet no art
Or power of theirs can rescue Him. He goes
To yield his bosom to the poisoned dart
Of quenchless malice ; frenzied are His foes :
They crown His brow with thorns, in mockery of His woes.

X.

Now they condemn Him, nail Him to the tree ;
Earth trembles to her centre, rocks are rent ;
The Sun himself, as if he loathed to see
A deed so dire, beneath the firmament
Closes his burning eye, and Night is sent
To wrap, in sable mourning, all the skies.
The bow of Heaven's avenging wrath is bent ;
E'en from their mouldering tombs the dead arise,
And wide creation starts, and shudders, when He dies !

XI.

Sleep on, ye mournful few! Oblivion's smile
Is sweet to hearts assailed by whelming fears!
Slumber in hope; for yet a little while,
And Heaven's kind hand shall wipe away your tears;
Soon joyful tidings shall salute your ears:
That morning comes which scatters night away,
Shines, with increasing light, through future years,
Fills all the powers of darkness with dismay,
And, on the pure in heart, sheds an eternal day!

XII.

Without the city walls, in nook retired,
And seldom by intruding footsteps trod,
Covered with beauteous plants and flowers admired,
A spacious garden spread its verdant sod.
'Twas not unlike the Paradise of God,
Once robed in beauty by the Almighty Hand,
Ere Justice raised her sin-avenging rod,
For violation of Heaven's high-command,
And drove the ungrateful pair from that delightful land.

XIII.

Wealth freely lavished of her treasures here;
Its favoured owner viewed it with delight:
When life's decaying scenes should disappear,
Here he resolved to spend that dreamless night,
Which snatches all the living from our sight.
Hence, in the solid rock, with nicest care,
A tomb was cut. It was still new and bright;
Till lately, no pale corse had slumbered there;
Now, it held Him, who died to save us from despair.

XIV.

Joseph, thy heart was generous and kind,
 Freely thy own last resting-place to yield
To Him who was of meek and lowly mind,
 And thus, His form from foulest insult shield ;
 Yet, He thy wounded heart had kindly healed !
'Twas joy to thee to make this poor return ;
 And sweeter, when in death thine eyes are sealed,
Will be thy lowly couch. No costly urn
So prized ; though, all around, the fragrant incense burn.

XV.

And He, the loved of Heaven, the scorned of earth,
 The Holy One, most mighty, yet most meek,—
Who chose a manger for His place of birth,
 Who, though so rich, for us was poor and weak,—
 Now lies in Joseph's tomb. On His cold cheek,
No longer now are seen its vermil dyes ;
 His lips, once filled with grace, have ceased to speak ;
Fast closed in death are those benignant eyes,
Which oft, so freely, wept our sins and miseries !

XVI.

O Death, thou art a cruel foe indeed ;
 Thy crushing arm no earthly power withstands ;
Thou canst outstrip the lightning in thy speed ;
 The millions of all ages and all lands
 Are like the spider's web, when in thy hands :
The young, the gay, the elegant, the fair,
 Are ever subject to thy dread commands ;
Lulled in the lap of ease, or vexed with care,
Touched by thy blighting hand, their hopes dissolve in air.

XVII.

How great, how wonderful thy triumph now !
O ! what a victim to thy tyrant power !
And must that peerless One before thee bow,
Whom herald angels, at His natal hour,
From Heaven's pure azure, when no cloud did lower,
Honoured with shouts of joy and songs of praise,
And loud proclaimed the Refuge and the Tower
Of guilty man ? Then, crown thy brow with bays
Never to fade, O Death, till time itself decays !

XVIII.

Yet, spoiler, boast not of thy cruel power ;
Whom thou hast conquered, soon will conquer thee.
E'en now approaches the triumphant hour,
When Heaven and earth shall shout His victory !
Thou from His presence shalt with terror flee,
Pierced with a wound no art can ever heal :
Rising to Life and Immortality,
He, to a ruined race, shall then reveal
A hope, that from the grave shall all its horrors steal.

XIX.

Thus, pale and silent, sleeps the holy dead ;
His face no stain of guilty passion shows ;
All trace of suffering from His brow has fled :
How calm and yet majestic His repose !
A mighty stone the Sepulchre doth close ;
A Roman guard stands near, in dread array,
Placed to secure the triumph of His foes.
Careful they watch the tomb that holds His clay,
Lest He should rise, and tear the bars of death away.

XX.

Ye sacerdotal tyrants, vain your rage ;
Vain all expedients to avert your shame !
What though the powers of earth and Hell engage,
To quench for ever that celestial flame
Kindled in many a bosom by His name !
What though your Benefactor ye have slain,
And still are bent His honour to defame !
Your hated Prisoner soon will burst His chain,
And, over all His foes, in glorious triumph reign !

XXI.

" On us and on our children be His blood,"
Stands charged against you, in the book of God.
O dreadful imprecation ! What a flood
Of fearful wrath portending ! Soon, the rod,
Uplifted now, shall fall ! Your towers shall nod,
Your walls shall crumble, and your temple grand
Dissolve in flames, and Heaven and earth applaud
The dreadful scourge that sweeps o'er all the land.
Tremble, ye rulers proud, for ruin is at hand !

XXII.

Poor, scattered remnant of a chosen race,
Once numerous, powerful, opulent, admired ;
Objects of special providence and grace,
Divinely taught, with love of country fired ;
How sadly all your glory has expired !
Your own Messiah sought you, and, with tears,
Deplored your threatened ruin, and desired
To gather you in love, as, moved by fears,
The hen protects her brood ! Dreadful your doom appears !

XXIII.

Now, to your own fair land ye turn, in vain,
Your longing eyes. With strong affection still,
Your hearts are hovering o'er the verdant plain
Of distant Jordan, over Zion's hill,
Over Siloam's fount, and Kedron's rill ;
Altar and temple, sacrifice and rite,
Priest, monarch, prophet, your sad memory thrill :
Judea's glories all are vanished quite ;
Your hopes, your dearest joys seem wrapped in utter night.

XXIV.

Ye withered branches of a noble vine,
Once green and vigorous on your native tree ;
Ye rebels against David's royal line,
Whose deathless claims ye still refuse to see ;
O ! when shall your deep, mental darkness flee !
Ye restless wanderers, to your Prince return ;—
That generous Prince who died for you and me ;
On Him, who all your crimson guilt has borne,
Now look, in faith and love ! Weep, captives, weep and mourn !

XXV.

Then, shall your crushing sorrows have an end ;
The thickening storm shall quickly pass away ;
O'er Heaven's broad arch the bow of peace shall bend,
Sweet promise of a bright, eternal day !
No more in grief and darkness shall ye stray ;
Your long forgotten Jubilee shall come ;
Zion shall rise to know no more decay ;
Safe shall ye dwell, in your own peaceful home,
No more, through hostile realms, poor and despised to roam.

XXVI.

And lo ! that hour approaches. Sybil leaves
Announce it not ; Apollo's shrine is still,
And speaks no hope to him, who silent grieves,
And longs to stand erect on Zion's Hill,
And all the sacred air with praises fill ;
But leaves, engraved by an Almighty Hand,
And oracles that speak Jehovah's will,
Tell of its coming. Soon will heralds stand,
And summon your return, from every distant land.

XXVII.

I see your scattered tribes, from every clime ;—
From distant India, rich in gems and gold ;
From Africa, whose sons, from ancient time,
To foster pride and avarice have been sold,
And whose tremendous wrongs can ne'er be told ;
From oceans studded with a thousand isles ;
From northern Europe and Siberia cold ;
From every region, now, they come with smiles,
Well pleased at their escape from error's darkening wiles.

XXVIII.

And now they stand where Turnus Rufus ploughed
The field once moistened with a nation's tears ;
They weep and laugh ; they mourn and praise aloud ;
Strange sounds commingle in their raptured ears ;
Gone are the sorrows of unnumbered years !
How dear the dust of Zion's sacred hill !
Joy for their sorrows, hope for all their fears,
Rest for their wanderings, every bosom fill ;
They shout : Messiah reigns ; bow to His sovereign will !

XXIX.

Yet, once more, lowly Sufferer, to Thee,
Laid in the silent tomb, we reverent turn ;
Borne thither from the strife of Calvary,
That hearts, so obdurate and slow to learn
As ours, with Thee might, in the grave, inurn
Our cares and sorrows all ; and, from Thy death,
Meekly endured for us, be taught to mourn,
As those whose griefs are but a transient breath,
Brief as the shadows which Thy rising scattereth.

XXX.

The guards are watching still. On their broad shields
And glittering spears the sickly moonbeams fall ;
Among the Sons of Light, in azure fields,
No song is heard ; 'tis grief and silence all.
The earth seems covered with her funeral pall ;
The dews, descending on each herb and flower,
Seem not such drops as come at Nature's call,
But tears of Angels, wept at this sad hour,
While o'er Messiah's form stern Death retains his power.

XXXI.

Wide o'er the land the power of darkness reigns ;
The vales, the hills, the mountain peaks are sad ;
Merom's cool waters, Jordan's liquid plains,
And Cinnereth's broad waves in grief are clad ;
The Sea of Death, once whelming cities mad
In ruin dire, now sheds a deeper gloom
On its wild, dreary shores ; as if to add
Horror to sadness, and portend the doom
Of those whose guilt consigned the Saviour to the tomb.

XXXII.

Nature, devoid of life, mourns not alone ;
For all the vegetable tribes are pale,
Or bathed in tears ; their verdant freshness gone !
Sharon's bright rose, the Lily of the vale,
The glorious Palm, the flowers that scent the gale
With breathing fragrance, pine, and, bending low,
As conscious that their strength, so weak and frail,
Were withered by some stern, resistless foe,
Now tremble, and give signs of universal woe.

XXXIII.

Creation animate seems pressed with grief :
The finny race that roam the liquid deep ;
The insect tribes that make the flower, the leaf,
Their green abode ; the feathered tribes that keep
The ear of night soothed with their notes, and steep,
In sweet oblivion, human cares, or cheer
The morning hour of those who wake to weep ;
Fish, insect, bird, beast, reptile, shrink with fear,
As if some direful foe were ever lurking near.

XXXIV.

But lo ! the morning casts her feeble ray
On Hermon's sides, and gilds his lofty head ;
And, brightening with the flames of rising day,
The towers and palaces of Salem shed
Reflected lustre ! Roused from restless bed
And frightful dreams, the busy, anxious throng,
To seek relief, from inward grief, are led
In crowded shop, or mart, to linger long ;
But none salute the hour with joyous matin song.

XXXV.

Morning has broke, but not upon the grave;
Still dwell the shades of night in Joseph's tomb;
And, while they rest on Him, who came to save
The wandering and the lost, Death's heavy gloom
No morn can scatter! Like the day of doom
Seem the slow moving hours. The sun looks pale
And sickly. Radiant Hope, as if no room
Were found for her on earth, spreads to the gale
Her glittering wings. All hearts with fear and sorrow fail.

XXXVI.

In Hell, alas! Messiah's death imparts
No swelling grief. There, joy and triumph reign,—
Such joy and triumph as arise in hearts
Sated with deeds of vengeance; for, in vain
Do spirits lost to virtue strive to gain
A momentary respite from their woe;
They, doomed by justice to remorse and pain,
The peace of innocence can never know;
Of hope itself bereft, their tears incessant flow.

XXXVII.

The great, determined foe of God and man,
Who in the Saviour's death had gained his end,
Still anxious to pursue his favourite plan,
His own usurped dominion to defend,
And sin's destructive influence to extend,
Had summoned all his subjects, far and near,
To greet his presence, and their audience lend
To his behests supreme. They now appear,
And, thus, while Satan speaks, bend an attentive ear:

XXXVIII.

Princes, Immortal Spirits, Sons of Light,
O ! ever faithful, at your leader's side ;
Once blissful, now degraded from the height
Of glory, disinherited, decried ;
Of all your rights in mockery denied ;
Hail, victors ! Welcome, hope ! Away with fear !
Now slumbers, in the tomb, the Crucified ;
Arise, and claim, once more, your native sphere ;
Nor grovel here in woe, through an eternal year !

XXXIX.

I claim not, now, your tribute of applause ;
Let us on other cares our thoughts bestow ;
Yet, what my efforts in the common cause,
Past scenes, so rich in triumphs, plainly show ;
Nor need I utter what yourselves do know.
Who first the standard of revolt did rear,
Before that Throne where living splendours glow ?
Made Michael and his angels quail with fear,
And scatter, in their flight, the helmet, shield and spear ?

XL.

Why mention Eden ? 'Twas a favoured spot
Chosen and adorned by God Himself ; and there,
Were sparkling fountain and refreshing grot,
Trees hung with golden fruits for ever fair,
Flowers of all hues, whose fragrance filled the air,
Shades ever verdant, birds of sweetest song,
And, 'mid a scene so bright, the happy pair.
'Twas hard such bliss, such innocence to wrong,
And waken gathering woes, which ages still prolong ;

XLI.

But pride and sweet revenge required the deed ;
'Twas joy to thwart Jehovah's power and love ;
Why should this riven heart with pity bleed,
Even for beings guileless as the Dove !
Am I not exiled from the climes above ?
And who has doomed me to this nether world
Of darkness, fire and pain ? And will He prove
More kind, if I forbear ?—'Gainst Him who hurled
Me from my throne in Heaven, my standard's aye unfurled !

XLII.

'Gainst Him and all His works, I war proclaim
Protracted, stubborn, constant, without end :
By force and fraud, by deeds without a name,
I'll follow, persecute His every friend ;
Hence, I to His new world my flight did wend,
When first it rose in beauty, 'mid the smiles
Of angels, and the morning stars did lend
Sweet music ; and, the Serpent's subtle wiles
Employing, ruined earth with all its happy isles.

XLIII.

Where now the purity, the peace, the bliss,
Of those who were, in Eden's garden, placed ?
Their home, so happy once, resembles *this*,
By sorrows flooded and by crimes defaced !
Both they and their descendants, how debased !
The vices all stalk forth with haughty air,
And meet applause. The virtues are disgraced,
And held in low repute. Hence, toil and care,
Want, sickness, grief and pain, and woe and wan despair.

XLIV.

Death o'er the ruined race his sceptre sways,
Peopling the graveyards with his gathered spoils ;
Yet, not content to wait the numerous ways
In which the Fowler spreads for them his toils,
They oft engage in feuds and deadly broils,
In which whole nations, stung with mutual hate,
Perform Death's office, fattening their own soils
With human flesh ; yet, wondrous to relate,
Those who have butchered most, are reckoned wise and great !

XLV.

Sweet, then, is my revenge, and doubly sweet
Their impious contempt of Him I hate ;
In oaths and curses some His name repeat ;
While some ascribe to Chance, and some to Fate,
All beings and events both small and great :
Others His wisdom, justice, power deny,
Or think He reigns in such exalted state,
In glorious palace far beyond the sky,
He cannot condescend on them to bend His eye !

XLVI.

How well they learn my lessons, with what care
They practise all my precepts, doth appear
From endless forms of worship : earth, sea, air,
Teem with their idol gods. Debasing Fear,
And Bigotry that never sheds a tear,
Lust, Pride, Hypocrisy, in every clime
To stocks and stones Altars and Temples rear ;
Thus, rendering sacred infamy and crime,
And forging chains for souls with all their powers sublime.

XLVII.

Laws, contracts, obligations, dearest rights ;
All ties of country, friendship, kindred, love,
Are nought ; neighbour his neighbour smites,
Brother his brother, friend his friend ; the Dove
Of Concord takes her flight for climes above,
Leaving behind a world of woe and tears ;
Mothers, to babes like the stern ostrich prove ;
Oft, when impelled by superstitious fears,
They doom them to the fire, e'en in their tender years !

XLVIII.

What time the earth with violence was filled,
And impious deeds, ye all remember well ;
Then, wrath divine, not like the dew distilled,
But, as the mighty rushing torrent fell ;
The depths below burst up with dreadful swell,
The clouds above discharged their boundless tide,
And all that lived, and on the earth did dwell,
Were covered, by a Deluge deep and wide ;
Save that, within the ark, a few the waves defied.

XLIX.

Our potent Enemy, in later age,
When from His worship man again had strayed,
Lest the whole race should spurn Him, and engage
In worship of the gods themselves had made,
A grand expedient summoned to His aid.
One people he selected from the rest,
And straight advanced them to a higher grade,
In privilege and knowledge ; them He blest,
And bade them, without fail, obey His high behest.

L.

But how perverse they proved, I need not tell.
Earth never bore a more ungrateful race ;
Rebellion's path they trod, and loved it well ;
They e'en provoked their Maker to His face,
Though objects of His special care and grace !
Jehovah sent them teachers of His will,
Who sought their love of idols to displace ;
Some they imprisoned, others they did kill,
And thus their city, oft, with guiltless blood did fill.

LI.

Lately they had a Messenger, whose fame
In Heaven, and earth, and Hell is widely known.
Commissioned from the Throne of God, He came,
Myself, your chosen leader, to dethrone,
And rescue those who 'neath our sceptre groan.
Of birth mysterious, and of virtue pure,
Most wondrous are the deeds that he has shown ;
Nor could we think our empire firm and sure,
Assailed by One so great, yet patient to endure.

LII.

His signal virtue I have often tried,
By all the arts which promised me success ;
To tempt Him, I have threatened, flattered, lied,
Placed Him in peril, want, and deep distress ;
And yet He still retained His holiness.
Firm as a rock, He baffled all my power ;
I trembled, lest the race He came to bless
Should burst their cursed chains, and from that hour,
The roaring Lion flee, who seeks but to devour.

LIII.

And yet, by others, faithful to our cause,
My fixed and settled purpose I have gained.
The Jewish rulers trampled on the laws,
Which, in profession, they themselves maintained;
His wondrous claims they stubbornly disdained.
Among His own disciples, there was found
One, whose base heart by avarice was stained,—
A vice oft held on earth in love profound,
But never known in Hell, through all its fiery round !

LIV.

This passion, which was dormant, I inflamed ;
When straight those canting hypocrites he sought,
And hinted that his Lord, whom they defamed,
'Gainst whom such accusations false they brought,
Whom they maligned, despised, and set at nought,
For stipulated sum he would betray.
At this proposal base they quickly caught,
And promised him a paltry sum to pay ;
When he, for love of gold, bargained his soul away !

LV.

Just at the foot of Olive's Mount, there lay
A level garden, thick embowered in shade ;
As if, at close of the departing day,
For holy rest and deep devotion made ;
Thither, that meek, despised One often strayed,
To seek support from Heaven in earnest prayer ;
His pitying Father oft vouchsafed His aid,
To Him so much beloved ; while lingering there,
Admiring angels stood, or hovered in the air.

LVI.

Well did the traitor know that lovely spot ;
'Twas well adapted to his fiendish end ;
And hence, he constantly revolved the thought
There to betray his best and dearest Friend ;
The place, the hour, would no suspicion lend.
When, therefore, next his Master should resort
Thither, at night, in fervent prayer to bend,
The hardened traitor purposed in his heart,
Him to deliver up, to Envy's hellish dart.

LVII.

And now, in sweet and holy converse met
For the last time, reclined the sacred band
At board of Paschal Feast. They never yet
Had once suspected that a traitorous hand
Would dare to strike at Him, at whose command
The winds and waves were hushed ; whose voice so dear
Had soothed their sorrows, and whose aspect bland
Had often quelled their grief. Unawed by fear,
They to His lessons kind now give the listening ear.

LVIII.

But while the cup of joy is circling round,
Deep sorrows gather on Messiah's brow ;
And then He utters, with a sigh profound,
And tone which makes them all in anguish bow :
Some one of you will break his plighted vow,
And wickedly betray me to my foes ;
E'en in this dish the traitor's dipping now.
Judas, quick, execute your deed ! He rose,
And swiftly trod the path which leads to deathless woes.

LIX.

Now, in night's stillest hour, beneath the gaze
Of all the stars, which bend a listening ear,
Laid prostrate on the earth, Messiah prays.
His soul is racked with agony and fear,
And from His eyes falls many a bitter tear.
He seems to struggle with some mighty ill,
And earnestly entreats His Father dear
That the deep cup of woe may pass, yet still,
In sweet submission, bows to His own Father's will.

LX.

It was a sight to make infernals weep ;
Yet wept not I. Why should I ? Never ! No,
My selfishness and hatred are too deep,
Alas ! to melt in tears at others' woe !
Ages on ages, still, *my* sorrows flow ;
Why weep for Him ? But, from the realms of light,
Where blissful Cherubim in rapture glow,
A sympathizing angel bends his flight,
And soothes the suffering One, 'mid sorrow's heavy night.

LXI.

As tender mother sad and silent stands,
Yearning o'er dying infant ; while its eyes,
Like flickering lamp, shine dimly, and its hands
Are raised imploring help ; so, with hushed sighs,
And inward grief, and looks of deep surprise,
Stands the kind angel ; and then, bending low,
Pours in His ear consoling words, and tries,
By every gentle art, to soothe His woe ;
But what those words expressed none here will ever know.

LXII.

The Sufferer is strengthened and sustained ;
Once more upon His brow beams the calm ray
Of Hope ; though still His gentle heart is pained.
He rises from the earth, and takes His way
Whither His slumbering disciples stay ;
What ! sleep, said He, and in an hour like this !
Lo ! Judas comes, your Master to betray,
With hostile band ! The signal is a kiss !
This, the vile traitor gives, and forfeits perfect bliss !

LXIII.

They seize Him, bind Him, hurry Him away
To the Grand Council, met in palace hall
Of Caiaphas, Hight Priest ; nor wait till day,
Ere they commence His trial. Forthwith all
Assail the Prisoner, whom they hold in thrall,—
With matchless impudence false charges bring,
Suborn false witnesses to work His fall,
And, as if guiltless blood would leave no sting,
Condemn Him, having erred not in the slightest thing.

LXIV.

But impotent their malice ; for the time
Has long since passed, in which their stern decree,
Dooming to death, e'en for the highest crime,
Could be enforced by them ; and hence, they see
That still their hated Prisoner must go free,
Unless the Roman power will raise its hand
To smite Him ; therefore, quickly all agree
To send the case to Pilate, whose command,
The substitute for Cæsar's, rules their guilty land.

LXV.

And now, before his bar He stands arraigned,
And undergoes the strictest scrutiny ;
His character, examined, proves unstained
By e'en suspicion's breath ; yet still they try—
Lest they should fail, through Pilate's clemency—
By stirring up the mob, to gain their end ;
Hence, ' Crucify Him,' is the general cry.
In His calm looks, patience and pity blend,
While, with their hostile shouts, the very heavens they rend.

LXVI.

The Roman trembles at the gathering storm ;
Injustice triumphs, Malice has her will ;
The cruel scourge mangles His sacred form ;
Insults and scoffs His cup of sorrow fill ;
With savage joy they haste His blood to spill.
Not He the death of common felons dies ;—
Nailed to the cross of shame, on Calvary's Hill,
He hangs suspended 'twixt the earth and skies ;
As if, from Him, they both withdraw their sympathies !

LXVII.

Why should I certify His innocence ?
'Tis not because I *loved* Him, well ye know ;
His holiness to me gave just offence,
Because it rendered Him a mightier Foe
To me, and all that serve me here below ;
But greater foe the greater honour brings,
To such as deal, to him, a fatal blow ;
And hence, this damning deed a radiance flings
O'er me, who thus have foiled and grieved the King of kings !

LXVIII.

'Twas I who wakened, in the traitor's heart,
The lust of gold ; who roused the pride and hate
Of Jewish Priests and Rulers. Every art
Insidious I employed ; the small, the great,
All ages and all ranks, throughout the state,
Were but my tools ; the credit 'bides with *me*.
Our Enemy has met a dismal fate,
And from His potent arm we now are free.
Infernal spirits, hail ! Raise shouts of victory !

LXIX.

Thus Satan vaunted, swoll'n with haughty pride ;
Nor vaunted he in vain. The eager hosts
That sat condensed around the circle wide,
Now startled Hell, through all its dismal coasts,
With loud acclaim, in answer to his boasts :
All hail, triumphant chief ! Upon thy head
Now rests a fadeless crown ! Our sacred oaths
Anew we plight with joy ! Our Foe is dead !
Darkness is in His tomb, while hope on us is shed !

LXX.

Henceforth on earth, of strife the chosen field,
With Heaven we no divided empire hold ;
To our dread sway shall all her millions yield,
And safe be gathered in our gloomy fold,
To suffer woes that never can be told.
Spirits immortal, rouse your slumbering powers !
Your armour gird, your standard broad unfold ;
Prepare at once to scale Heaven's lofty towers ;
The conquest of our Foe proclaims that that is ours !

LXXI

Thus fiercely raged, and madly triumphed, all
Those guilty, fallen spirits, as if spite
Could soothe their anguish, or repair their fall ;
But pride and hate can never give delight,
Or change infernal darkness into light ;
They whet the teeth of the undying worm,
Arouse remorse to keener appetite,
Render the galling chains of death more firm,
And lend a darker hue to wrath's eternal storm !

LXXII.

The odours of applause which they had shed,
Upon their Chief, seemed grateful ; and his hand
He waved in sign of silence. On his head
Sat starry diadem, and high command
Beamed from his eyes ; his form majestic, grand
And towering, shot forth rays intensely bright.
Glorious he shone, but not like those who stand
Guileless : he wore the garb of Sons of Light ;
While, 'neath this outward show, dwelt pain, remorse, and
spite.

LXXIII.

Lauded for his superior tact and zeal,
The dreadful grief that in his bosom preyed
With utmost effort he could ill conceal ;
And now, 'mid deepest silence, he essayed—
Conscious that much he needed every aid
In furtherance of his hate to God and man—
To rouse those demons, who his will obeyed,
To mightier efforts. All his visage scan,
While, to their eager view, he thus unfolds his plan :

LXXIV.

Brave spirits, sharers of my toil and fame !
Great thanks ye merit, for your kind applause ;
And yet I labour not to gain a name,
But to support, advance our common cause ;
Nor, for a moment, will I ever pause,
Until our rights withheld we all regain,
And, trampling under foot Jehovah's laws,
O'er all his wide dominions spread our reign ;
And fill even Heaven itself with darkness, woe and pain !

LXXV.

Well may we in our victory rejoice ;
For He whom once we feared is in the grave ;
The elements, the dead, obeyed His voice ;
But His own periled life He could not save ;
Transient His course, like bubble on the wave.
Now let us finish what we have begun ;
'Tis by the active, vigilant and brave,
That noblest triumphs ever have been won ;
The name of such endures while endless circles run.

LXXVI.

The second day now hastens to its close,
Since our great Foe in winding-sheet was laid ;
Soon darkness o'er the earth its shadow throws ;
Fit time for demons to pursue their trade,
And wrap the earth in Hell's eternal shade ;
Hence, let us to that guilty world repair,
Which seems for our peculiar province made ;
In mutual toils and counsels let us share,
And shed, on all its climes, the blackness of despair.

LXXVII.

First, we will visit that accursed land,
From which the rays of Truth once spread abroad,
And in those very places take our stand
Where pious monarchs oft and prophets trod ;
'Tis ours by right, for there the Son of God—
So called by voice from Heaven—was crucified.
No holy angels now protect the sod,
Deep crimsoned with His blood. 'Tis open wide,
And to our vengeful wiles exposed on every side.

LXXVIII.

There, all things plainly second our design ;
There, then, our direful conquest shall begin.
All bands we'll sunder, civil and divine,
And boundless license give to every sin,
And woes produce such as have never been !
Suspicion, Envy, Avarice, and Pride,
And foul Hypocrisy, with pious grin,
Shall, like fell demons, spread their triumphs wide,
And every virtuous deed in shame its head shall hide.

LXXIX.

Nor difficult our enterprise, I ween ;
For many faithful helpers will be found
Among those very persons, who are seen
Daily proclaiming, by the trumpet's sound,
Their goodness vast, their piety profound.
Such coadjutors much our cause avail ;
Their dreadful deeds e'en Hell itself astound !
How, then, can our expected triumph fail !
Haste ; spread, without delay, our banner to the gale !

LXXX.

Thus spoke the fiend, and thus expressed his will :
Instant, from voices numberless, ascends
A shout of approbation loud and shrill,—
A shout which every sound of discord blends,
And Hell's broad, lurid, dismal concave rends :
At once they rise, tumultuous, at his call,
Resolved to second his nefarious ends ;
And, as swoll'n torrents from the mountains fall,
They roll, in murky tide, from their grand Council Hall.

LXXXI.

Like some vast armament with sails unfurled,
And sweeping onwards, through the azure deeps,
Laden with missiles, in which death is hurled ;
Seeking some ocean queen to lay in heaps,
O'er whose approaching danger pity weeps ;
Thus speed these spirits foul to seize their prey,
With a vindictive hate that never sleeps.
On dusky wing through space they cut their way ;
Till on the sacred soil their wearied footsteps stay.

LXXXII.

Now fanned, at length, by fresher, purer air
Than that which ruffled erst their drooping wings
In stifling Hell ; and cheered by scenes more fair
And bright than those in which the King of kings
Reveals all direful, all abhorrent things ;
Which pour fierce terror on the guilty soul,
Writhing, in vain, while Conscience whets her stings ;—
Now, as if broken loose from all control ;
Wide o'er the land they spread, bent to secure the whole.

LXXXIII.

As when, in sunny regions of the east,
Where vernal influence spreads to every eye,
On Nature's lap, a rich and boundless feast;
The locust tribe darkening the mid-day sky,
Like clouds which, on the wings of tempests, fly;
Descending, cover meadow, forest, bower;
And, stung with hunger keen, assiduous ply
Their might destructive; till each herb and flower,
Each green and lovely thing, yields to their deadly power;

LXXXIV.

So swarm these fiends determined to destroy;
Through fields, o'er hills and streams, pursue their way,
Infest each scene of beauty and of joy;
In hamlet, village, city, make their stay;
Assail the sober now, and now the gay,
With fierce temptation, or seductive wile;
Urge farther still those who are led astray,
By wild ambition, or by passions vile;
And view their dire success, with an infernal smile.

LXXXV.

Some, by strong curiosity impelled,
Visit those scenes of supernatural power,
Where once their dark companions were expelled,
From those who, during many a dreary hour,
Had felt their might to harass and devour.
Some gaze, with trembling awe, upon that Sea,
O'er whose swoll'n waves the storm once ceased to lower,
Not by degrees, but instantaneously;
As if 'twere curbed by Him who fills immensity.

LXXXVI.

Some wander o'er the bleak and rugged strand,
On which assembled thousands had been fed
By that mysterious One, whose mighty hand
Could, on the barren rock, a table spread,
Yet now, O strange ! is slumbering with the dead !
Some cluster round the dark and damp recess,
In which the mouldering corse had made its bed,
And waked again, relieved from stern duress,
By the strong arm of Him whose errand was to bless.

LXXXVII.

Some haunt those Olive groves, whither, so oft,
The Saviour had retired, for secret prayer
And holy converse with the skies. The soft
And gentle zephyrs freely wandering there,
And stirring the green leaves, and, on the air,
Pouring sweet murmurs, waken solemn dread,
In their vile bosoms ; and they scarcely dare,
'Mid scenes so fraught with hallowed thoughts, to tread ;
Lest vengeance, from above, should smite their guilty head.

LXXXVIII.

They long to gather round the silent tomb,
Where sleeps the form that once such power displayed ;
And yet the thought seems like the day of doom ;
Hence, from the sacred spot they shrink dismayed.
To other scenes, which make them less afraid,
They wend their way ; the city walls ascend,
Or mount her towers, or loiter 'neath the shade
Of the proud Temple's porticos, or blend
With the deep tide of life rolled onward without end.

LXXXIX.

It is the time of evening sacrifice.

The ceremonies of a thousand years
Are taking place. The victims, culled with nice,
Assiduous care, and many boding fears,
Are hurried to the Altar. Blood appears
Upon the hand of him who wields the knife,
Even before that trembling hand he rears,
To inflict the blow that takes the victim's life.
Priests, Levites, thronging crowds, are all with terror rife !

XC.

These guilty spirits triumph at the sight,
And, with insulting gesture and grimace,
Mimic the worshippers to show their spite.
Knowing that now, within that sacred place,
Jehovah deigns no more to show His face,
They dance around the Altar, frisk and leap,
And, through the Temple courts, each other chase ;
And even, within the riven veil, they sweep,
On sable wings, a sight to make the angels weep !

XCI.

No glory rests upon the mercy seat
To dart among them fierce, devouring flame ;
Else they would never labour to repeat
Their visit, but, o'erwhelmed with fear and shame,
Flee to that dismal world from which they came !
Hence, where the Cherubim display their wings
Of burnished gold (regardless of the same),
They fearless tread ; yet conscience fiercely stings,
While they explore the place, where dwelt the King of kings.

XCII.

Some wander restless round that torpid sea
Which holds, embalmed in Naphtha, ruins dire
Of those who lived in pride and luxury,
And suddenly were wrapped in penal fire,
That none their base example might admire,
But, timely warned, avoid their dreadful fate ;
Others, from these wild, dreary shores, retire,
Ascend the neighbouring mountains desolate ;
Or, in the desert, seek balm for their hopeless state.

XCIII.

And yet, amid these scenes for ever cursed
With desolation, they can find no rest.
Wide fields condemned to an eternal thirst,
With neither beauty, life, nor verdure blest,
Waken sad memories, in their guilty breast ;
Remind them of their own abhorred abode,
By justice stern in ceaseless horrors dressed.
Their cup of bliss once sparkled, overflowed ;
But now no bliss is theirs ; though sought, 'tis not bestowed !

XCIV.

But chiefly within Salem's walls they throng,
As best adapted to their purpose dire ;
And while tumultuous thousands move along
Her lanes and streets, or anxiously retire
From bustling life to their own household fire,
To meditate new schemes of future gain,
Or honours fresh, and past success admire ;
There spirits foul assail them not in vain ;
Seeking to bind them fast in sin's appalling chain.

XCV.

One walks beside the gay and thoughtless belle,
That trips the pavement smooth, with mincing gait;
And whispers in her ear, to ponder well
Her claims to be admired ; proceeds to state,
That she is destined to no common fate ;
That she has wisdom, beauty, polish, grace ;
Charms overpowering to the rich and great ;
That Venus looks, with envy, on her face ;
That hence, in lofty sphere she sure will find her place.

XCVI.

Another flatters the fantastic beau ;
Tells him of raven locks and ruddy cheek,
And eyes that with unrivalled lustre glow,
And teeth of pearl, and forehead round and sleek,
And lips that nought but tones of music speak ;
Reminds him, that, to slight his form, so fair,
Would indicate a judgment poor and weak ;
Helps him build lofty castles, in the air ;
Yet seeks, by every art, to lead him to despair !

XCVII.

Another still, pours, on the listening ear
Of him whose sole delight is worldly pelf,
And who to mis'ry never gave a tear,
Much less, a crust from his encumbered shelf,
The sage advice : Do justice to yourself ;
Tells him that, if he lose his precious gold,
Its very ghost, like some infernal elf,
Will haunt him, when his limbs are weak and old ;
Bids him beware of want, whose woes can ne'er be told !

XCVIII.

And yet another plies his wily art,
To puff, with pride, the sainted Pharisee ;
Suggests to him the goodness of his heart,
So pure, so pious, so entirely free
From smallest spice of dark hypocrisy ;
Tells him that none will find a higher place,
Or brighter crown, in Heaven above, than he ;
That all his goodness, is, indeed, of grace,
But those less pure than he, are in a dreadful case !

XCIX.

Each, fishing in the pool of selfishness,
Among a rabid, and yet dainty fry,
That in the present place their only bliss,
And on the future look with careless eye,
Presents to each expectant, moving nigh,
Bait that is suited to his special case ;
Now to the hook doth skilfully apply
The love of fame, or dread of deep disgrace,
And now, the love of wealth, of pleasure, power, or place.

C.

Satan himself, with all those noble powers,
Which once, among the Cherubim found play,
In high emprise, employs the fleeting hours ;
Resolved to swell the triumphs of the day,
By leading Caiaphas still more astray ;
Or rather, in the path he has begun,
Causing him onward to pursue his way ;
For guiltier deed remains not to be done,
Than that already past, the murder of God's Son.

CI.

Hence, he inspires him with increasing hate
Towards Him who has been crucified and slain,
And all His followers, who deplore His fate ;
Tells him that labours past will be in vain,
If reverence for the Nazarene remain ;
That his own standing, honour, life, require
To heap reproach, disgrace, vindictive pain,
On all who still the smitten One admire ;
Until His very name in obloquy expire ;

CII.

Exhorts him to convene, without delay,
The Jewish Senators in Council grand ;
There to advise, consult, contrive a way,
By which their ever sacred, honoured land,
So long, by breath of love from Heaven, fanned,
May be delivered from the dreadful pest
Of heresy, whose guilt no mind has scanned.
Satan, to soothe and tempt him, does his best,
Pointing to high rewards, at last, among the blest !

CANTO II.

THE DISCUSSION.



CANTO II.

THE DISCUSSION.

ANALYSIS.

Apostrophe to adversity.—Close of the day.—Preternatural darkness, without any intervening twilight.—Universal terror.—Apostrophe to Jerusalem.—Discussion in the Jewish Sanhedrim.—Character of Nicodemus.—His speech.—Ascribes the preternatural darkness to their treatment of the Saviour.—Vindicates His character.—Describes the miracle of the blind restored to sight.—Warns them of the consequences of their conduct.—Impression produced by his speech.—Character of Caiaphas.—His speech.—Justifies his opposition to the Saviour, on account of the meanness of His birth, &c.—Attributes His miracles to Satanic influence.—Character of Joseph of Arimathea.—His speech.—Answers the objections of Caiaphas.—Foretells approaching judgments.

ADVERSITY.

O DREADED Power ! upon whose solemn brow
Sit mingled hope and terror, smile and frown,
Whose hand doth wield a sceptre, peaceful now,—
Like gentle shepherd's crook, for safety known,—
And now an iron rod in anger shown ;
Whose eyes are, now, suffused with pity's tears,
And, now, are darting rays of vengeance down ;
O frown not ; waken not our guilty fears !
But shed sweet peace on all our dark and mournful years.

We would not deprecate thy visits. No !
Where thou art not, life is a fearful thing,
Giving short bliss repaid by endless woe,
Derived from injured Conscience' dreadful sting,

For blessings misimproved ; yet, awful King !
Be present, not in anger, but in love ;
For thou the blessing and the curse canst bring ;
An angel, or a demon, thou canst prove ;
A guide to dismal realms, or fairer worlds above !

Come, as thou didst to Joseph, when, for gold,
To chaffering Arabs, bound for foreign mart,
By his unfeeling brethren he was sold,
To gratify a proud and envious heart ;
Bitter the tears that from his eyes did start,
When doomed an exile, in a foreign land ;
Yet thou, mysterious Power, with wondrous art,
Didst safely lead him, by thy rigid hand,
Even to the second grade in Egypt's high command !

Or, as thou didst to Jesse's sorrowing son,
Like Partridge, hunted in the deserts wild ;
Fleeing to caverns deep, or mountains dun ;
Forsaken, persecuted, doomed, reviled,
By one who should have loved him as a child !
By thee instructed, trained, admonished, blest,
Full well he learned to sway his sceptre mild,
O'er wide rejoicing realms, and give them rest ;
Though, through long years before, by cruel foes oppressed.

Or, as thou didst to that illustrious band
Made signal by the eloquence of Paul ;
Who, by their faith, did mighty hosts withstand,
And put to flight the alien armies all ;
Were rendered strong, though their own strength was small ;
Stopped lions' mouths, and quenched the violent flame :
On them thy hand did most severely fall ;
Yet thou didst bless them, with a deathless name ;
And every coming age shall brighten with their fame.

Or, as thou didst to those, who, 'neath the rod
Of stern oppression, grieving, left the land
They dearly prized ; and, for the love of God
And civil freedom, sought the rugged strand
Of Plymouth old, its rock and forests grand ;
Cheerful they braved the stormy seas, and came
To these wild, western shores, a glorious band ;
And, 'mid December's snows, kindled a flame,
Which never will expire, while Freedom has a name !

Or, rather, as thou cam'st to Him who lay,
O'ershadowed by thy wing, in Joseph's tomb ;
Then, short indeed, but blest, will be thy stay ;
For He, whom thou didst lead through death's deep gloom
To highest Heaven, where joys immortal bloom,
Will welcome us, led by the same dark way,
To His own bright abode ; and give us room
Among the ransomed. There, we will display
His grace, in rapturous praise, through an eternal day !



I.

Long has the sun his cheerless pathway trod
Thick, muffled up in clouds ; as if to hide
Some inward grief, he would not spread abroad
By smiling rays diffused through Nature wide ;
But hastening now to meet the azure tide
Of Western Sea, he sends his parting rays
Aslant the earth, which Heaven has defied.
On Joseph's tomb he casts a farewell gaze,
Before, in sable night, he wraps his dying blaze.

II.

The gilded Temple roof reflects a light
Feeble and pale, not such as in the day
Of Zion's beauty, when it met the sight
Of those who thither came, their vows to pay.
Once, pious Jews, while hastening on their way,
From every distant portion of the land,
Soon as their eyes beheld its kindling ray,
With pleasing rapture long would gazing stand ;
But now no glory rests upon their Temple grand !

III.

The earth is wrapped in deep obscurity,
At once ! Ere twilight gray, with dusky wings
Expanded wide, hovers o'er earth and sea,
A shadow gathers on all living things ;
Not such as soothing Nature often brings,
When she would lull her children to repose ;
But fearful, strange, such as the pale moon flings
Upon the earth, portending future woes.
Thus dark the day elapsed ; but darker still its close !

IV.

The beasts of prey steal silent to their lair ;
Fowls of all wing within their covert hide ;
The insect tribes, that filled the ambient air,
Are vanished all ; and men can scarce abide
Each other's looks. Along the streets they glide,
Saluting none ; from out the frowning skies
Strange faces peer ; which, mingling hate and pride
And fiendish pleasure in their glaring eyes,
Awake, in every soul, strange horror and surprise !

V.

The light of day, as in a moment, ends ;
Nature, from purpose, or forgetfulness,
To guilty Palestine no twilight sends ;
But, like some widowed mother in distress,
Enshrouds herself, at once, in sable dress.
The lurid clouds, descending, touch the ground,
And dense and gloomy on its bosom press ;
Thick darkness reigns, like that in Egypt found,
When, on her stubborn king, in wrath Jehovah frowned !

VI.

In sudden gloom are wrapped the various throngs
That frequent Salem's streets, or crowd her marts ;
Hushed is their conversation ; hushed their songs ;
Each one, with fear and trembling horror, starts ;
And, anxious, for his distant home departs ;
But darkness tangible obstructs his way ;
To gain their object, baffles all their arts ;
They grope in vain, or wander far astray ;
Or stumbling, lie and wait, and long for coming day.

VII.

To add fresh horror to their gloomy fear,
And waken feelings kindred to despair,
Strange whispers fall upon their startled ear,
Mingled with hisses dire. The very air
Seems filled with beings viewless. While they stare,
And vainly seek to ascertain the source
Of sounds so fearful, they behold the glare
Of flaming eyes ; and then, in accents hoarse,
They hear the wild shout, ' Crucify Him,' peal with whelming
force.

VIII.

Quivering they start, scarce knowing if the sound
From their own guilty bosoms finds its way,
Or if it comes from demons hovering round,
Pleased with a night that knows no softening ray.
Inly they grieve and weep, and strive to pray ;
But while they raise their voice to Heaven in vain—
For no kind tokens their sad vows repay—
From the dense shades, which o'er all Nature reign,
O ! Crucify Him ! meets the startled ear again.

IX.

Then bursts a shout of long and loud acclaim,
Rending the very Heavens with its sound ;
Deep thunders crash, and vivid lightnings flame,
And Salem's towers seem tumbling to the ground ;
The earth, as starting from a sleep profound,
Trembles and groans, through all her wide domains ;
Like some lorn criminal by justice found,
And doomed of horrid death to bear the pains,
To expiate that blood whose guilt his conscience stains.

X.

O Salem, doomed to ruin, for the tears
And bitter griefs of Him who wept thy fate ;
Well may'st thou tremble now, with boding fears,
And mourning, on the earth set desolate !
But lately, O how different thy state,
When He who loved thee much, in triumph came,
And with Salvation passed within thy gate !
Then, thou didst hail his presence with acclaim,
Exulting to confer fresh honours on His name !

XI.

Meek, yet majestic, through thy streets He passed,
His claims as King of Zion to display;
Ah! then, how many thousands rushed, in haste,
Gladly their honours at His feet to lay!
They strewed their very garments in his way,
Saluted him with rapturous songs of praise,
And waved before Him Palms of Victory;
While children did their loud hosannas raise,
And all on him, as Lord, fixed their admiring gaze!

XII.

Thy habitations, then, were bathed in light;
Thy walls, thy palaces, thy Temple fair,
Thy lofty towers were robed in glory bright;
Sweet, soothing strains of music filled the air;
Such as enliven hope and quell despair.
How sadly changed is thy condition now!
What, in thy soul, has roused corroding care,
And made thee low in dust and ashes bow?
In penance dost thou weep, and mourn some broken vow?

XIII.

No! 'tis the blood of innocence that fills
Thy burdened heart with anguish and dismay;
Hence, wrath intense upon thy soul distils;
Hence, peace and joy no longer make their stay
In thy grieved heart, but wander far away.
How hast thou treated Him who came to save!
How couldst thou thy own Prince, Messiah, slay?
Thy ruthless hand has laid Him in the grave;
Hence, o'er thy guilty head sweeps ruin's dreadful wave!

XIV.

To hail Him now with joy, now plot His death ;
Now shout hosanna ; now send forth the cry
Of bitter scorn ; thus changing, like the breath
Of fitful zephyr ; Oh ! with insult high,
Thy peaceful King to kill and crucify ;
What folly, frenzy, can compare with this !
Why should not holy angels, from the sky,
Bending with horror, weep in tenderness,
And yet approve the wrath that fills thee with distress !

XV.

Meantime, for consultation high, had met
The Jewish Sanhedrim, in wisdom skilled
And legal knowledge. Ere the sun had set,
With premonitions sad, and terror filled
For blood of innocence that they had spilled,
They had assembled, at an early hour,
In the grand Hall of Council. Horror thrilled
Their boding hearts ; when, from some vengeful power,
Night, in her darkest form, wrapt city, palace, tower.

XVI.

Well, then, did they remember, and, with dread,
Messiah's words, who plainly had foretold
His speedy resurrection from the dead :
When the third day its splendours shall unfold,
No longer Death, said He, my form shall hold.
These words awaited but the coming day ;
When their deep mystery should be unrolled,
And He, who, shrouded now in darkness lay,
As waked from sleep, would tear the bars of death away.

XVII.

Long time they sit in silence, and disclose,
In all their looks, the feelings that, suppressed
And crushed before, like fierce, conflicting foes,
Now reign within. Those passions, once caressed
And flattered, struggle fiercer in each breast,
And banish tranquil joy from every mind.
O! whither can they look for peace or rest,
While Conscience, that before seemed weak, or blind,
Now shows a giant's strength, and revels unconfined!

XVIII.

Remorse seems feeding on the guilty past;
Terror sits trembling at the approaching storm;
Pride stands resolved to brave each threatening blast;
And Hate towers dreadful, in her sternest form;
And fierce Ambition, with her hands still warm
With guiltless blood, determines not to quail.
Alas! that Goodness, with her winning charm,
Has little suff'rance there. All else must fail,
To save the Ship of State, while labouring in the gale!

XIX.

Yet, 'mid the general wickedness, a few
Choice and illustrious spirits still remain,
Who to the principles of right prove true,
Firmly resolved their honour to maintain;
Nor now to plead the cause of truth refrain,
Though well aware of peril thus incurred;
To truckle to injustice they disdain;
A noble courage in their hearts is stirred,
Not to be quelled by fear, nor awed by tyrant's word.

XX.

'Mong these is Nicodemus, who, by night,
Had once instruction from the Saviour sought,
And listening to His precepts with delight,
By heavenly influence had, at length, been brought
To reckon all his former wisdom nought.
Fear led him, then, in secret to repair
To Him, whose lips celestial lessons taught;
But having known His love and tender care,
He feels a courage roused which nothing can impair.

XXI.

While stillness reigns around, and every eye
Kindles with expectation mixed with grief;
And every labouring bosom heaves a sigh,
As inly pained, and longing for relief
From Heaven's portending wrath, of ills the chief;
He calmly rises, with the deep impress
Of thought upon his visage, and in brief
Yet energetic terms, essays to express
His feelings to his peers. The following his address :

XXII.

Ye venerated rulers of a land
So often signalized by power divine;
Terrors seem gathering on every hand,
As if to crush us all things would combine.
Your looks declare no welcome task is mine,
While I attempt, with boldness, to reveal
The cause of our distress. May Heaven shine
Upon your minds, and render this appeal
The means of leading all to seek the common weal !

XXIII.

'Tis sad the blood of innocence to shed !
Blood has a voice that penetrates the skies ;
This the first murderer felt when Abel bled,
To his own goodness made a sacrifice ;
And now, against yourselves it loudly cries :
Avenging Heaven has heard its pleading tones ;
Hence, fearful portents gleam before your eyes ;
All Nature seems to utter piteous moans,
And, by her deep distress, your fearful crime disowns.

XXIV.

He whom you deeply hated, scorned, reviled,
Nailed to the cross in agony and shame,
Indeed was holy, harmless, undefiled.
Envy herself could charge Him with no blame ;
Nor, without guilt, reproach His glorious name !
Touched with our sorrows, anxious for our good,
To bear our griefs and dry our tears he came !
How often by the bed of pain He stood ;
While from His eyes streamed forth a sympathetic flood !

XXV.

He healed the sick, restored to sight the blind,
Gave hearing to the deaf, life to the dead,
Quelled the fierce horrors of the frenzied mind,
By demons foul in chains of darkness led ;
For, at His word, those guilty demons fled ;
In brief, what could His potent voice withstand ?
Yet, through your means, lately His blood was shed ;
And midnight, for the deed, enshrouds the land,
And o'er us gleams a sword, waved by the Almighty's hand !

XXVI.

Whence came that power He wielded at His will ?
Would Heaven its influence to deception lend,
Give to a vile impostor wondrous skill,
And make all Nature to his wishes bend ?
How comes it that He acted as a friend
To justice, truth, benevolence and love,
And never sought to gain one selfish end ?
Was not His spirit plainly from above ?
His character, His works, His heavenly mission prove !

XXVII.

Our ancient Legislator—by whose hand
Jehovah such stupendous wonders wrought—
Spread plague and ruin over Pharaoh's land,
And from hard bondage Jacob's children brought,
While all their foes in the Red Sea were caught,
And sunk, like lead, amid the mighty deep ;—
Him you revere, and justly ; for he taught,
From God's own mouth, those holy truths that keep
Beaming on us, in love, those eyes that never sleep ;

XXVIII.

Him you revere, as one divinely given
To be our honoured Leader, Teacher, Guide ;
Make us acquainted with the will of Heaven,
That in Jehovah's ways we may abide,
And never from his precepts turn aside ;
But why to him such veneration due ?
By signs and wonders is his mission tried ?
The man of Nazareth has shown them too,
And in the sight of all, as is well known to you !

XXIX.

Moreover, of His deeds, the grand design,
Most clearly obvious to the sense of all,
Was not the infliction of the wrath divine
Which guilty rebels dread, but to recall
The lost to virtue, and to break the thrall
Of sin and death, and set the captive free ;
No sufferer He slighted, great or small,
To Him for succour once disposed to flee.
Must He, for deeds like these, be held an enemy ?

XXX.

Among His acts of mercy freely shown
To those whose sad condition warmly plead
For friendly succour, I remember one,
Which, to all feeling hearts, upon His head
Has a benign and pleasing lustre shed ;
I notice this, because to you 'tis known,
And widely through our nation has been spread.
It is a case which you cannot disown,
Involving stubborn facts, not to be overthrown.

XXXI.

There was a youth, who, from his very birth,
Had passed his tedious years, devoid of sight ;
Seldom his face betrayed the smile of mirth ;
And well he might be sad, wrapped in a night,
On which no morning shed its joyous light :
When smiling Spring her welcome visit paid,
And clothed the fields and bowers in beauty bright,
Oft 'neath some shady tree his form he laid,
Longing to view those scenes to other eyes displayed.

XXXII.

He heard sweet music from the whispering groves,
But saw not quivering leaf, or chirping bird ;
He heard the mellow notes of mourning doves,
The busy hum of swarming bees he heard,
And every sound which slumbering Silence stirred,
But saw not mourning doves, or swarming bees ;
Nature could whisper many a cheering word,
But showed him not her fields and waving trees,
And rippling streams, and lakes that ruffle in the breeze.

XXXIII.

His parents loved him, and would fain have soothed,
By fond indulgence, his o'erburdened heart ;
But wealth's appliances had never smoothed
Their rugged path through life ; hence, vain their art
And industry unwearied to impart
Due food and raiment to their sorrowing child :
He begged his bread ; thus, opening to the dart
Of scorn his bosom : many oft reviled
This needy one, on whom fortune had never smiled !

XXXIV.

Day after day he sat, silent and sad,
By the road side, where travellers bent their way ;
Touched with deep pity, some approached the lad,
Wrapped in a shade, pierced by no brightening ray,
And, smiling, in his hand their pittance lay :
Their bounty cheered him, but their gentle smile
To his own grieving heart could find no way ;
Others, instead of helping, did revile,
Thus adding to that woe, which nothing could beguile !

XXXV.

While sitting thus in deepest shades of grief,
Among the thoughtless crowd that passes by,
Approaches One, who grudges not relief
To any humble child of misery ;
The poor lorn beggar catches now His eye,
And instantly He stops, a boon to impart
Which soon will make the fount of sorrow dry,
That long has gushed, in fullness, from his heart,
And gladden him, whose case defies all human art.

XXXVI.

The wondrous Prophet, to his sightless eyes,
As if some hope to awaken of a cure
To be effected, moistened clay applies,
And bids him to Siloam's fountain pure,
If of the boon desired he would be sure,
Direct his steps, without the least delay.
The unhappy patient, willing to endure
Much greater toil to find the light of day,
Straight to the fountain named eagerly gropes his way.

XXXVII.

Who can describe the rapture and surprise
Which sudden fill his heart, while washing there !
As in a mirror, placed before his eyes,
And that, without his previous thought or care,
He sees reflected his own image fair.
It copies all his movements, gestures, deeds ;
Assumes his every attitude and air ;
With him approaches now, and now recedes ;
On that he gazes long, nor other object heeds.

XXXVIII.

Now bursts a wider prospect on his sight ;
Green vales and swelling hills and azure skies ;
The holy city clad in golden light ;
Her walls and bulwarks, towers and palaces ;
And her proud temple, which all else outvies.
And now the various forms of life appear ;—
Birds clothed in plumage bright of various dyes ;
Flocks grazing in the meadows, without fear ;
Insects, beasts, living men, his raptured vision cheer.

XXXIX.

O'er all the scene, a Sabbath stillness reigns ;
Save that within Moriah's sacred bounds,
On which Jehovah's presence aye remains,
The voice of melody and praise resounds ;
And truth is heard, which heathen gods confounds.
In that inclosure, now, he longs to stand,
Which Heaven's selected worshippers surrounds ;
And swell the triumph of that chorus grand,
Which pours the swelling notes of praise on every hand.

XL.

O wondrous Power ! which thus, with ease, unseals
Lids closed in sorrow's long and rayless night ;
And to the ravished soul, at once, reveals
A world, entirely new, in beauty bright !
Who but must view it with intense delight ?
Did ever such a case occur before ?
No ! since creation burst upon the sight
Of gazing angels, never ! O ! no more
Revile such power divine, but wonder and adore !

XLI.

Did you rejoice with him who thus obtained
A boon more precious than a mine of gold ?
Were you not rather sorely grieved and pained ?
And with a cruel scorn, which can't be told,
Did you not, straightway, drive him from our fold ?
O ! ye who worship at Jehovah's shrine,
As if by fear and love of Him controlled,
Why, to the wretched, grudge His gifts divine ?
Preventing all relief, while they in sorrow pine ?

XLII.

Why should I mention other wondrous deeds
Which wide have spread that sacred teacher's name ?
Who calms the tempest, hungry thousands feeds,
Quells fierce diseases, devils puts to shame,
Can surely need no herald of His fame !
These deeds He has performed, and many more ;
Yet they have failed your stubbornness to tame !
Your guilt is like a sea without a shore.
O pause, and think, and weep ! Repentant sorrows pour.

XLIII.

When to the grave His body was consigned,
As if resolved to break His peaceful rest,
With Roman Pilate you at once combined,
To station there a guard, in armour dressed ;
And what the motive which you then expressed ?
Lest His disciples should approach by night—
Poor, sorrowing flock, with every ill distressed—
Convey his lifeless body out of sight,
And, then, pretend that He had risen to life and light !

XLIV.

Absurd the motive ; wretched the pretence !

What could they gain by practice of such fraud ?
Poor and despised, deprived of all defence

From stern and dread oppression's crushing rod ;

No succour could they hope from man or God.

Their interference wakened not your dread ;

But the prediction that was spread abroad,
That He whom ye have slain would, from the dead,
Speedily rise, and pour confusion on your head !

XLV.

Indeed, 'tis true, that He Himself foretold

His future resurrection, and the day
Of its occurrence ; and there's none so bold

As to anticipate the kindling ray

Of the next morning's sun without dismay ;

For *then* the Prophet's *meaning* we shall know.

The event will scatter every doubt away,

And, to the most incredulous, will show

Whether the cheerless tomb will let its Prisoner go.

XLVI.

What if that very form, so vilified,

So tortured, racked with agonizing pain,

To gratify stern bigotry and pride,

Should, at the time predicted, live again,

Sundering for ever death's tremendous chain !

How would you meet those calm, majestic eyes,

Which o'er your hardness, like the gentle rain,
Once shed benignant tears ? O ! what surprise

And consternation, then, in every heart would rise !

XLVII.

But grant a literal resurrection not involved
In the prediction; grant that His pale form,
Still resting in the tomb, be not absolved
From the strong bands of Death; yet a fierce storm
Of wrath may then arise. His viewless arm,
Stretched forth in withering strength, may smite His foes;
Or His oppressed disciples, from alarm
Instant recovering courage, may disclose
A wonder-working power which nothing can oppose.

XLVIII.

Think not to baffle Heaven's benignant love,
Yearning o'er human guilt and misery;
Rich drops of consolation from above
Distilling on sad hearts; hearing the cry
Which want and suffering send to pierce the sky;
Think not God's fount of tenderness to close!
His high authority you may defy,
And thus involve yourself in fearful woes;
But struggle as ye will, His stream of mercy flows.

XLIX.

Like your unfeeling ancestors, your hands
In blood of righteous prophets you may stain;
Thus spurning e'en Jehovah's high commands,
And giving to your lusts unbridled rein;
But think not to escape the direful pain
And anguish which a fell remorse can bring!
Pause in your course, lest injured Heaven, again
Aroused to wrath, should on our city fling
Red bolts of death, with which the universe will ring!

L.

Thus Nicodemus spoke, mingling with tears
Of tender love his admonitions bold ;
He aimed not merely to arouse their fears,
But with due faithfulness their guilt unfold ;
That, trembling at the clouds which o'er them rolled,
Big with approaching wrath, by timely heed
Of danger, and by penitence not cold
And formal, the effects of their vile deed
Might not ensue, to make a guilty nation bleed.

LI.

Among his hearers scattered sparsely round,
There were a few whose feelings, like the lyre
That's sweetly tuned, and swept by skill profound,
Made music to his words. A sacred fire
Burned in their bosoms. Fain would they aspire
To vindicate the right, in spite of power
Wielded by bigotry and cruel ire ;
But O ! how unpropitious was the hour !
Profuse their tear-drops fell, like the descending shower.

LII.

Far different feelings did the rest betray :
Of deep contrition they disclosed no signs ;
Already had they gone so far astray,
The truth that flashed upon their darkened minds,
Like lightning's gleam, which, while it dazzles, blinds,
Only involved them in still deeper night ;
They showed, by acts and looks of various kinds,
Their settled opposition to the right ;
Envy prevailed, and pride, and bigotry, and spite.

LIII.

None listened to the speaker who had closed,
With feelings so resentful and malign
As haughty Caiphas. None had opposed
So bitterly Messiah. His design
Was wholly selfish. Civil and divine
Enactments under foot, alike, he trod.
To rule, to stand pre-eminent, and shine
In public estimation, was his god.
He loved, when self required, to wield oppression's rod.

LIV.

And yet he should have been a man whose heart
Was deep imbued with every virtue rare ;
For he was called by Heaven to take a part
In mysteries sublime and holy. To his care
Were trusted interests with which none compare.
The sacerdotal mitre crowned his head ;
The splendid robe of Aaron he did wear.
On him that consecrating oil was shed
Which wide, on all around, a heavenly fragrance spread.

LV.

That glittering Breastplate, which contained enchased
Gems of all hues, emitting radiance bright ;
On which, engraved by nicest art, were placed
The names of all the tribes, revealed to sight,
And shining beauteous in their glowing light ;
That Breastplate on his bosom he did wear ;
A symbol that he claimed it as his right,
Before the eternal Throne their cause to bear ;
And hence, should seek their good, with never-ceasing care.

LVI.

He oft before the sacred Altar stood,
In attitude of lowliest reverence ;
And, sprinkling it with expiatory blood,
Thus made atonement legal for offence,
To Him whose justice every sin resents ;
And once a year, while thousands filled the space
Within the temple courts, at the expense
Of bleeding victims, did alone find grace
To pass within the veil, of all, the Holiest Place.

LVII.

There, far removed from every vulgar eye,
Where once were dread memorials of the past—
Those leaves of stone, engraved on Sinai high ;
That rod, whose blossoms age could never waste,
That heavenly manna grateful to the taste ;
That ark, o'ershadowed by the glittering wings
Of Cherubs, who the seat of mercy faced—
There, in the presence of the King of kings,
Caiaphas often stood, and served in holy things.

LVIII.

Such was the exalted sphere in which he moved,
And such the sacred trust to him assigned ;
Placed in such station, him it much behoved
To lead a life to pious deeds confined,
And show to all, a pure and generous mind ;
But highest rank, in him, was deepest shame ;
Within his sacred vestments he enshrined,
Not Him who rightly all his love did claim,
But selfishness and pride, and guilty lust of fame.

LIX.

Close had he listened to the impassioned tones
Which flowed, profuse, from Nicodemus' tongue,
With inward effort stifling his groans,
Lest he disclose his perturbation strong ;
Till, at the close, by guilt and anger stung,
He rose, in wrath, determined on reply ;
The sacred mitre from his head he flung,
And thus began, with arm uplifted high ;
While blended guilt and rage were sparkling in his eye :

LX.

What ! shall the wisdom, virtue, sanctity,
Of this illustrious Council stand arraigned,
And that for felon deeds of blackest dye ?
Who dare assever that our hands are stained
With blood, because we have maintained
The vigour of our laws, and punished crime ?
Instead of this, we merit thanks unfeigned !
Which one of you would wish to see the time
When justice, foiled and crushed, shall hide her head sublime ?

LXI.

Look at *His* rank and standing, for whose death,
As causeless, wanton, cruel, we're defamed ;
Why need I, in this Council, spend my breath,
In showing His debasement ? Are we blamed,
Because of His mean birth we feel ashamed ?
What ! yield our homage to the Nazarene !
What ! credit his pretensions, when He claimed
To be the true Messiah ! This, I ween,
Had made us fools indeed, such as were never seen !

LXII.

What proofs of such distinction did He bring ?
Are we to yield to every base pretence
Put forth by impudence ? Unheard of thing !
Shall imposition thrive, at our expense ?
And we, while acting but in self-defence,
And striving to detect the enormous fraud,
Be charged as guilty of a grave offence ?
How love our country, how revere our God,
Unless, in such a case, stern Justice wield her rod !

LXIII.

Transcendent claims to royalty indeed !
How did He show them ? What did He proclaim
As maxims of His government ? *To bleed
And die, is noble ? For the name
Of country to contend, is lasting fame ?
No ! Love your enemies and do them good ;
To do them injury, is real shame ;
When weary, give them rest ; when hungry, food.*
How this could conquer realms, I never understood !

LXIV.

Is it on such a Prince that Judah leans
When foreign foes oppress her, and she groans,
And pines in anguish, for the efficient means
To break their yokes, and trample on their thrones ?
Under a Prince like this, our fathers' bones
Would send remonstrant voice from out their graves !
Rome treads us in the dust ! The whole world owns
Her crushing sway ! The conqueror who braves
Her arm of iron strength, must not be ranked with slaves !

LXV.

'Tis said, He pitied much the suffering poor,
Wept o'er their sorrows, ministered relief;
But ship, by tempest threatened, fain would moor,
In some safe port! What was His object chief,
In catering to their passions? What, in brief,
But to secure their help in stormy day?
To think He loved them, startles all belief!
'Gainst us how fiercely did He oft inveigh!
Who can have genuine love, and yet such hate display?

LXVI.

From mobocratic empire what could rise
But strife, dissensions, revolution, blood;
Startling that haughty Power, whose jealous eyes
Scan every movement in no friendly mood;
Prepared to sweep, like overwhelming flood,
Over our land, and all our cities burn?
His influence, then, could surely bode no good!
And shall we to His grave with pity turn?
Far better He should die, than a whole nation mourn!

LXVII.

But He performed sublime and wondrous works,
And claimed, from hence, commission from above!
Who can be ignorant that suspicion lurks,
In prudent minds, that all His deeds of love
Were mere pretence, and plainly nothing prove,
But His ambition artfully concealed?
He did, from the possessed, devils remove!
But has not Satan, more than once, repealed
The apparent laws of Heaven, and wondrous power revealed?

LXVIII.

What if, to this great Enemy, was given
Permission thus to aid Him, but to try
Our firm adhesion to the laws of Heaven ?
'Twere just, in such a case, that He should die ;
Nor tempt the people of the Lord Most High !
Why vindicate His cause with heated zeal ?
Why o'er His self-wrought ruin weep and sigh ?
Who for His death should guilt and sorrow feel ?
We have but acted right, and for the common weal.

LXIX.

Do any tremble at the clouds that lower,
The omens strange that flash upon our sight ;
As if, for crime, some high, avenging Power
Had sudden wrapped us in Egyptian night ?
Who knows but our delay to act aright,
And punish the delinquent, long before,
Has roused against us God's resistless might ?
Well may we dread the gathering tempest's roar,
When we neglect the cause of Him whom we adore !

LXX.

It has been hinted, that we greatly fear
The coming issue of to-morrow's sun !
We fear it not ! No more will He appear,
To finish the dire task He had begun !
His race of imposition He has run ;
And met its just result, in the dark grave
Of shame and infamy and endless scorn !
Others He saved ; Himself He could not save !
For ever, o'er His tomb, may death his banner wave !

LXXI.

But, grant that His prediction be fulfilled ;
Grant that He rise with the next morning's light ;
Shall we, with startled fear and horror chilled,
Wish for concealment in the shades of night ;
Or think that our Messiah meets our sight ?
No ! Though He make His exit from the dead,
We cannot, will not recognize his right
To sway the rod of empire o'er *our* head ;
For, when Messiah comes, on all His foes He'll tread !

LXXII.

No scourge, no thorny crown, no piercing spear,
No shameful cross, no ignominious grave,
Await the conquering Prince, who will appear
Our tribes from fell oppression's yoke to save,
And over our loved soil His banner wave !
Proud fleets, vast armies shall obey His call ;
His path to empire, humbled foe shall pave ;
Judea, then, relieved from foreign thrall,
With her victorious wings shall overshadow all !

LXXIII.

Thus Caiaphas. A sad example he,
How prejudice and pride pervert the mind ;
How those who think themselves from error free,
May, in a moral sense, be wholly blind,
And for enormous sin excuses find !
What more destructive to the mental sight,
Than a bad heart, most wilfully inclined
To embrace the wrong, and firm oppose the right ?
Heaven justly leaves such hearts shrouded in error's night !

LXXIV.

O! how unlike to Him, whose robe he wore!
More like to one, long after—Hildebrand—
Who, in the plenitude of tyrant power,
With crushing step trampled on every land,
That durst resist the pressure of his hand;
Bidding the rack, the flame, the sword destroy
Such as, to *His*, preferred *Heaven's* high command;
Rousing the wail of grief, 'mid scenes of joy,
In suffering Holland, France, Helvetia and Savoy.

LXXV.

Ye noble band of martyrs, who once led
A mournful life, amidst appalling fears,
And in the cause of truth so freely bled;
Thus shedding light and hope on future years;
Your Master had His sorrows and His tears;
Through death's dark vale He passed, a crown to gain;
And when, at last, in glory He appears,
He will receive you, with Himself to reign;
Nobly rewarding then your peril, toil, and pain!

LXXVI.

Soon as the speaker closed, throughout the Hall
Of Council ran a murmur of applause
Expressive of delight; and yet, not all
Could yield approval to so bad a cause;
Some grieved to hear one skilled in sacred laws
Revile the name of Him they loved so well;
None moved or spoke; there was a solemn pause;
Feelings were stirred which language cannot tell;
From here and there an eye the swelling tear-drop fell!

LXXVII.

Among this little number there was one
Of mild demeanor, yet of spirit bold,
Whom wealth distinguished as her favourite son ;
Yet had not filled his heart with lust of gold ;
Resemblance strong he bore to him of old,
Who, by his envious brethren sold a slave
To vile, seductive influence, was cold ;
Arimathea Joseph, kind as brave,
By love and pity led to find his Lord a grave.

LXXVIII.

He—unseduced by avarice and pride,
And unentangled by dark error's wile,
The faults of others more disposed to hide,
Than to proclaim them with an envious smile—
Was eminently meek, and free from guile ;
He had an unsuspecting, generous heart ;
Affecting in his life nor rank, nor style,
He learned, and practised much, that noble art,
Which purest joy derives from that which we impart.

LXXIX.

Yet, from a better Teacher than himself,
This sweet, this precious lesson he derived ;
Untaught by Him, though free from love of self,
At such attainment he had ne'er arrived ;
For human reason never yet contrived
The base and selfish passions to subdue ;
The heart, of heavenly influence deprived,
Can never find the Beautiful, the True ;
This, from experience sad, the humble Joseph knew.

LXXX.

Hence, deeply he regretted, sorely grieved,
To see his loved and honoured Master lie
Under reproach so causeless. He believed,
That, spite of frown and taunt and obloquy,
Duty required him to attempt reply
To charges so unfounded. Without fear,
Bending on all a calm, benignant eye ;
He rose, the cause of truth and right to clear ;
Some frowned in wrath ; a few dropped an approving tear.

LXXXI.

Much do I prize, he said, your worthy love,
Nor wish to sunder friendship's golden chain ;
Yet there's a just and holy Power above,
Without whose kind approval should we gain
The applause of men and angels, 'twere in vain ;
I covet not your hatred, but good will ;
Nor do I wish to give you causeless pain ;
Yet suffer me my duty to fulfill ;
Unwelcome truth may bless, though shown with little skill.

LXXXII.

Deeds that are past we never can recall !
They stand engraved in characters of light
Before the eye of Him who looks on all.
There they must ever stand. No angel's might
Can ever raze, or blot them from His sight !
The fearful ills the Man of Bethlehem bore,
Are deeds *now done*, not wrapped in future night.
Hence, they're suspended on our choice no more ;
Yet let us not repeat what we should now deplore !

LXXXIII.

We cannot now recall Him from the grave,
And reinstate Him in His former rights;
Yet still, His spotless honour we may save,
And dissipate that prejudice which blights
The fairest reputation, and affrights
The timid and the thoughtless. This the boon
That He demands! The generous heart delights
Freely to give it; and, when this is done,
His character will shine resplendent as the sun!

LXXXIV.

Do any stumble at His lowly birth,
And stigmatize Him as a Nazarene?
Make Him the subject of their scornful mirth,
Because in pomp and splendour never seen?
Small cause of opposition this, I ween!
He was not born at Nazareth, ye well know:
'Twas pride and causeless hate and bitter spleen
Gave Him the name; as public records show.
If any doubt the fact, let them to Bethlehem go!

LXXXV.

And what is birth? 'Tis but an empty name.
Think ye that He, whose comprehensive eye
Surveys, at once, creation's mighty frame,
Distinction makes between the low and high,
Among frail beings destined soon to die?
And does He smile upon the downy bed,
On which reposes princely infancy?
And does He no benignant influence shed
On babes that, on the straw, recline their lowly head?

LXXXVI.

Who is the man that in His sight is great?
He who is seated on a regal throne,
With jeweled sceptre, crown and robe of state,
Lauded by millions who his empire own,
And quick supply his wants as soon as known,
If he is vainly lifted up with pride,
Does but deserve his Maker's awful frown.
Not all his riches, pomp, and rank, can hide
His littleness from Him who fills creation wide!

LXXXVII.

Where does the great Jehovah fix His stay?
In such a heart as this, inflated, proud;
Callous to suffering, lighted by no ray
Of love to God or man; wrapped in the shroud
Of utter selfishness? Or, 'neath the cloud,
That, settling dark, conceals from every eye
The contrite heart, that scarce dare breathe aloud
Its sorrows and its wants, unto the High
And Lofty One, who sees and fills eternity?

LXXXVIII.

Soon must all such distinctions end in shame.
Where are the proud, the princely and the great,
Who, during rapid ages past, just came,
And triumphed for a while, then met their fate;
Leaving forever wealth and rank and state,
And mingling their proud dust with meaner clay?
No records now are extant to relate
Their feats and shows that lasted but a day!
Like shadows of the night, they all have passed away!

LXXXIX.

But He was mild and placable, and taught
Rather to suffer wrong, than do the same ;
He loved His enemies, and never sought,
By deeds of violence, to gain a name !
He was no conqueror panting after fame,
'Mid fields of death, where Rage and Slaughter reign ;
Lighting His pathway with devouring flame ;
And hence, Judea's hopes, through Him, to gain
Empire o'er all the earth, must surely have been vain !

XC.

Whence came this dream of universal sway,
O'er conquered nations, subject to our nod ?
Is it derived from what our prophets say ?
Or does it answer the design of God,
In rescuing our Fathers from the rod
Of stern oppression ; and with mighty hand,
While His own glorious name was spread abroad,
Planting them firmly in this goodly land ;
Subjected to the laws sanctioned by His command ?

XCI.

Has God selected, from the human race,
Our favoured tribes, merely to make display
Of worldly greatness ? Or, impelled by grace,
Has He, in wisdom, thus prepared the way,
To bring all nations underneath the sway
Of filial love, rather than slavish fear ?
And has He, in His word, foretold the day,
When One, by Him commissioned, shall appear
To conquer earth, and reign through an eternal year ?

XCII.

How will He conquer it? By sword and fire?
Will He heap fields of carnage with the dead?
To universal rule will He aspire,
With pinioned captives at His chariot led,
Weeping their friends and kindred that have bled!
Or, will He not erect a peaceful throne,
From which benigner influence shall be shed!
O! shall not grateful hearts His sceptre own,
Grateful, for sin and death for ever overthrown?

XCIII.

How bright the character of Him ye slew!
How mild He was, benevolent and kind!
His deeds of goodness thousands round Him drew;
And had He been of proud, ambitious mind,
To selfish interests alone inclined,
Those who revered Him, and beheld His might,
Could they from Him the least permission find,
Had hailed Him king, with rapturous delight;
But neither love nor fear could swerve Him from the right!

XCIV.

Which would ye choose to be your sovereign Prince,
The Saviour, or destroyer of his kind?
Alas! the days are few and mournful, since
On question such as this ye showed your mind!
There was a guilty wretch, in prison confined,
Whose hands were crimsoned with a brother's blood;
And who, with other ruffians, had combined
All laws to nullify, and, like a flood,
Cover with ruin dire this heritage of God!

XCV.

His very looks seemed cruel ; in his eye
Sat Death, like vulture watching for his prey ;
To stop the mother's breath, the infant's cry,
By one fell blow, while they imploring lay,
Were only sport to him ! He loved to slay !
Pity herself seemed gladdened at his fate ;
She had no tears, on him, to throw away !
Condemned to suffer death, the injured state
His exit from the world could scarce with patience wait !

XCVI.

Weep, Justice, Candour, Kindness, Tenderness !
Weep, solid rocks, melt down in flowing tears,
And mourn in inconsolable distress !
Thou soft-eyed Pity, stop thy listening ears !
Avert your eyes, ye sons of other spheres !
Creation, mourn ! A murderer's release—
One hackneyed in the trade of blood for years,
One whose demerit nothing could increase—
Preferred to that of Him whose word was life and Peace !

XCVII.

E'en this, alas ! was not the foulest blot
That Envy strove to fasten on His name !
With unsurpassed absurdity, it sought
His works of might and goodness to defame,
By stubbornly maintaining that the same
Were wrought by Satan's potency and skill ;
Conclusion most ridiculous and lame !
Grant that he had the power—had he the will
His own infernal cause madly to crush and kill ?

XCVIII.

What ! can the prince of devils take delight,
In doing good, in easing human pain,
In giving to the blind the use of sight,
In sundering error's dark and galling chain,
And bringing those to life whom sin has slain ?
Far other deeds employ his power and fraud !
Like ravening, roaring lion, he would fain
Extend the guilt and curse of sin abroad,
And plunge in hopeless woe the universe of God !

XCIX.

What was the grievous fault, the heinous deed,
Discovered in the Man whom ye arraigned,
Condemned in haste, and doomed in shame to bleed ?
E'en Pilate, after trial, felt constrained
To attest his innocence ; and, deeply pained
To yield Him to your hate, had set Him free,
Had ye not overawed him, and obtained,
By threatened tumult, the unjust decree
Which nailed Him, without crime, to the accursed tree !

C.

With counterfeited loyalty and love
To Cæsar's rights, which bitterly ye hate,
And gladly all the powers of earth would move
To crush for ever and annihilate,
Ye sought the peace and safety of the state
In outward show ; fearing, forsooth, the hand
Of Roman power, unless that Prophet great
Should, marked by felon's ignominious brand,
Expire upon a cross, and thus preserve the land !

CI.

How wilfully perverse, how madly blind !
Who cannot see how flimsy such pretence ?
How could that unpretending, lowly mind,
To Cæsar give occasion for offence ?
Alas ! the Arbiter of all events
Alone can tell what mischief will ensue
From deed so cruel ! If, at our expense,
Justice arise in might, and claim her due,
The blows which she inflicts will not be slight or few !

CII.

Have ye with guiltless blood defiled your hands,
To court the smile of those ye so much dread ?
The fearful deed has not dissolved the bands
By which, like helpless captives, ye are led ;
Still low before them do ye bend the head !
They may be summoned by the Eternal King
To scourge you for the blood that ye have shed ;
The Roman Eagle may expand his wing,
Where now the Temple Choir Jehovah's praises sing !

CIII.

Within those holy courts, which Pompey trod,
Where avaricious Crassus sought for gold,
Cæsar may stand in marble, as a god,
Demanding homage from the young and old ;
And vainly may ye seek, with courage bold,
Your house from profanation to defend ;
For He who once with His strong arm controlled
Our cruel foes, may no assistance lend ;
But leave us to ourselves, nor longer be our Friend !

CIV.

Our struggles for deliverance may but bring
A heavier scourge on all our guilty land ;
O'er all our fields cries of distress may ring,
And ravaged cities flame on every hand ;
Death within Salem's walls may take his stand,
Employing Insurrection, Famine, Sword,
As agents to fulfil his stern command ;
Ruin may seize the Temple of the Lord,
Where saints, for ages past, Jehovah have adored !

CV.

What then becomes us, as the appointed source
Of wisdom and instruction ? Shall we tread
Longer the path of guilt ? Or change our course,
Ere Heaven's avenging bolts shall smite our head ?
Shall we not bitter tears of sorrow shed
O'er the dark past, and with imploring eye
Look up to Him whose wrath we justly dread ;
Entreating Him to bid the storm-cloud fly,
And to our hopes reveal a calm and peaceful sky ?

CVI.

O ! shall we not do justice to the name
Of Him whom we have crucified and slain ?
Shall we not cease His memory to defame,
And rescue Him from foul suspicion's stain ?
This done, the smile of Heaven we may regain ;
But this neglected, ruin may betide ;
Helpless, despairing, we may call in vain
For succour in distress ; while, far and wide,
Roll the deep, stormy waves of death on every side !

CVII.

He ceased. Had candour dwelt in every breast,
His words had been benignant as the shower
Which, while the sun still hovers in the west,
Descends on hill and vale, garden and bower ;
Refreshing withering plant and drooping flower,
While in the east, on the retiring cloud,
Gleams the bright promise of a peaceful hour ;
But passions foul their guilty minds enshroud,
Which threaten to burst forth in tones of thunder loud.

CVIII.

Arimathean, thou hast nobly shown
Thy love to Him who greater love showed thee !
When He shall sit upon His judgment throne,
And from His face the heavens and earth shall flee,
Then, faithful one, shalt thou remembered be !
O what ecstatic joy shall fill thy breast,
When Him, in glorious triumph, thou shalt see !
No more derided, vilified, oppressed,
But welcoming His friends to their eternal rest !

CIX.

Leave we the Council now, in mental night
More deep than that which, robbed of solar ray,
Excludes all natural objects from the sight ;
And, while in error's maze they grope their way,
Led by their pride still more and more astray,
Direct our view to a far different scene—
A feeble, helpless band, filled with dismay,
And mourning o'er their lot with anguish keen,
Because their honoured Lord now sleeps in death serene !

CX.

Rest, Holy Saviour, in Thy silent bed !

Thy bitter tears and agonies are o'er ;

The thorn, the scourge, the cross, all in our stead

Meekly endured, shall visit thee no more !

O let me on Thy tomb Love's offering pour !

'Tis Paradise to sympathize with Thee ;

With Thee to die, be buried, rise and soar

To brighter worlds, and all Thy glory see !

This, this can sweeten death ; 'tis more than victory !

CANTO III.

THE TRIAL.



CANTO III.

THE TRIAL.

ANALYSIS.

Apostrophe to Despair.—Meeting of the disciples cotemporaneous with that of the Sanhedrim previously described.—Object for which they had been originally chosen.—Previous rank and employments.—Character.—Names.—Deep distress at the loss of their Master.—John attempts to console them.—His speech.—Assigns the reasons why he had supposed that Christ was the true Messiah.—Acknowledges his inability to account for His death.—Matthew's speech.—Describes his original character and employment.—His call.—The Feast made for the Publicans.—Kindness of the Saviour towards the poor and despised. His hope to dwell with His departing spirit, in a better world.—Peter's speech.—Deeply laments his denial of his Master.—Dwells on the kindness he had received from Him.—Deplores their hopeless condition.—Inconsolable distress of all.



DESPAIR.

TREMENDOUS Power! object of fear and hate ;
In the wide universe, without a friend ;
Dreadful, beyond conception, is the fate
Of all who 'neath thy cruel sceptre bend !
Fancy, in painting thee, can never lend
Exaggerated horrors ! Ruin's king !
No Esculapian power or skill can send
Balm to the heart that's punctured with thy sting,
More deadly than the bolt borne on the lightning's wing !

Yet thou wast born in Heaven, amid the songs
And hallelujahs of the Angelic Choir,
Where day, without declining sun, prolongs
The notes that tremble on the Seraph's Lyre,
Stirring devotion's pure and quenchless fire.

There thou wast born of thy fell mother, Pride ;
The radiant Son of morning was thy sire ;
Thou, or thy kindred, could not there abide ;
Else Death and Woe had reigned o'er all its regions wide.

Thou wouldst have silenced all its notes of praise,
And rendered all its burning raptures cold ;
Its joyous hosts no more had poured their lays
Melodious and sweet, from harps of gold ;
Life's sparkling river had no longer rolled,
Broad, deep and pure, from the Eternal Throne ;
The trees that shade its banks, withered, grown old,
No leaves and fruits immortal then had shown ;
The startled universe had pealed its dying groan !

Hence, thou, and all thy race, abhorred of Heaven,
As base intruders on her ceaseless bliss,
By the Almighty's hand were instant driven
To dwell below, in fathomless abyss,
Where tempests howl, fiends rage, and serpents hiss. !
There, amid groan and wail and clanking chain,
Woes of a world more dreadful far than this,
In peerless horror, thou dost hold thy reign,
Supreme, in dreadful might, o'er the dark world of pain.

Yet, thou dost sometimes visit our sad clime,
And, like Medusa, changing into stone
The victims lost of unrepented crime,
Dost, without pity, make thy terrors known.
The deadly paleness and the stifled groan,
The trembling heart and the imploring eye,
From vain regret of time for ever flown,
And dread presentiment of judgment nigh ;
These tell that thou art near, with scourge uplifted high !


Thou comest to the Sailor, who has braved
A thousand perils on the stormy deep,
And oft in foreign marts his flag has waved ;
But never sought that port, where ever sleep

Both winds and waves, and eyes no tears can weep ;
Amid the roar of tempest and the cry
Of billows that across the vessel leap,
And gleaming fires, and thunders pealing high,
He sees thy hated form in vengeance hovering nigh !

Thou comest to the sons of jest and mirth,
Carousing fearless o'er the midnight bowl,
Forgetful of their high, celestial birth,
Scarce conscious that they have a deathless soul,
And madly spurning Heaven's just control ;
While the wine sparkles and the cup goes round,
And Time's revolving wheels more rapid roll,
And Conscience' voice in noisy mirth is drowned,
Thou in the poisoned cup, among the dregs, art found !

Once, the dark shadow of thy dreadful wing
Rested on those delivered from thy sway,
And saved, for ever, from thy horrid sting ;
'Twas when their loved and honoured Master lay
Silent in death, and Hope's benignant ray
Seemed just expiring in an endless night ;
But soon he chased their thickening gloom away ;
He rose a Conqueror, and brought to light
Immortal joys, and thou didst vanish from their sight.

'Tis guilt that forms the poison of thy sting,
Thy fearful scourge, thy terror-speaking eye ;
Bereft of that, thou art a harmless thing,
Powerless to waken e'en the feeble cry
That trembles on the lips of infancy ;
Jesus has cancelled that which gives thee might
For all who to His precious blood apply ;
Then seek not such with horror to affright ;
But dwell in thy own home, the abyss of endless night !



I.

Within the Holy City, yet retired
From scenes frequented by the busy throng,
Were met, in sadness, those who had admired
The Saviour's presence, and enjoyed it long;
Assembled, not to advocate the wrong,
Or slander him who drank the cup of gall;
But, with deep reverence and affection strong,
Their flowing tears to mingle o'er His fall,
And ponder the dire thought that they had lost their all!

II.

Their small apartment furnished no display
Of gorgeous wealth or imitative art.
Lamps, couches, curtains, ranged in proud array,
And tinsel pomp and splendour, which impart
Unreal transport to the envious heart,
Were wanting there; and, had they all been found,
They had but added keenness to the dart
Which pierced their souls, inflicting rankling wound;
Grieved hearts find no relief where pride and pomp abound!

III.

They had selected this obscure abode,
As least exposed to Envy's piercing eye;
No pity to their Master had been showed,
And hence, to them danger might hover nigh.
Prudence required them from their foes to fly,
And not with carelessness provoke their rage.
Here, therefore, they were met to weep and sigh:
Sad were the thoughts which did their minds engage,
Awaking deepest grief, that nothing could assuage!

IV.

Their names, which, then, were wrapped in deepest shade,
Or served to waken scorn, or point a jest,
Are brightly, on the Sacred Page, displayed,
And, through all coming ages, will be blest.
How many, once by wealth and rank caressed,
Were vainly flattered with the hope of fame !
While these, by bigotry and hate oppressed,
And not aspiring to an honoured name,
Beam glorious as the stars, that shine with deathless flame !

V.

Since they assembled, on that mournful night,
Proud thrones have crumbled, empires passed away ;
Columns and temples, gorgeous as the light,
Now fallen to ruins, moulder in decay ;
Cities that teemed with life can scarce display
A single vestige of their former site ;
Their splendour was the triumph of a day ;
Time has but looked upon them in her flight,
And all their wealth and power and pomp have vanished quite !

VI.

Not so the deeds of this poor, friendless band ;
They form a monument, majestic, tall,
Deep-based and firm ; unperishing to stand
When Egypt's Pyramids shall crumbling fall,
And Ruin spread her empire over all.
The sun shall be divested of his rays,
And Nature robe herself in death's dark pall ;
While, with a lustre bright that ne'er decays,
These noble deeds shall shine while Heaven prolongs her
days !

VII.

They had been chosen as the special friends
And constant followers of their Master dear ;
Not to subserve private and selfish ends,
But that, being always to His presence near,
And giving to His words attentive ear,
They might be witnesses to all He said
And did, and furnish testimony clear
To His whole life, that all men might be led,
Through them, to trust in Him as their own glorious Head !

VIII.

Nor had they been selected from the great,
The learned, the opulent, the sons of fame,
Men of exalted influence in the state,
Attracting others by their very name.
They all from humble occupations came ;
Lest human reason should their acts assign
To their own power or skill, and bring to shame
Their worthy cause, as human, not divine.
Hence, in selecting such, the rays of wisdom shine.

IX.

Yet they were men whose native powers were strong,
And not of useful learning wholly void ;
'Mid stirring scenes and labours dwelling long,
By practice and experience they enjoyed
Knowledge, which, gained, can never be destroyed,
That which results from toil, in active life.
The mode in which their time had been employed
Formed useful preparation for the strife
And toil of future years, with pain and peril rife.

X.

Their names, now known through widest realms, were these :

Peter, first called, though not in rank the first,
Who of Heaven's Kingdom soon received the keys ;
Not to give cordial welcome to the worst,
And, with deep hate, pronounce the best accursed,
As he who claims the keys in modern times
Has done, unless he's very much aspersed ;
But to all future ages and all climes
To state the terms on which Heaven will remit our crimes.

XI.

Nor were his rights peculiar ; all his peers
Possessed the same prerogatives ; they all
Enjoyed the same advantages for years,
While under the same Teacher ; great and small,
The prince to rule, the servant low to fall,
And kiss his sovereign's feet ; such terms as these
Had ill subserved the object of their call ;
They had one Lord alone to serve and please,
And wide His name extend o'er continents and seas.

XII.

His brother Andrew next, and James and John,
The sons of Zebedee. These Christ did call
From famed 'Tiberias' shores, where they had drawn
From out its azure depths, involved in thrall
Of network strong, riches that formed their all.
By skill acquired, and toil confronted there,
And dangers which their hearts did oft appal,—
'Mid fiercer waves and storms they learned to share
In labours more severe ; yet sunk not in despair.

XIII.

Then, Philip and Bartholomew, less known,
But not unworthy of recorded praise ;
Thomas, the Twin, and Matthew, who had grown
Rich by receipt of custom. In his days
Of wealth, while each to him the tribute pays
Of his own district, forthwith his employ
He leaves, at Christ's command, nor even stays
One moment to deliberate. With joy
Preferring heavenly wealth to that which moths destroy !

XIV.

To these, add Thadeus, and another James,
Son of Alpheus, and called James the Less ;
And Judas, him of Cana ; eleven names,
Destined through coming years the world to bless ;
The twelfth, which added much to their distress,
Judas Iscariot, had proved traitor vile,
Lured by the love of money to transgress.
Sad warning to beware of Satan's wile,
Who loves to endless woe frail mortals to beguile !

XV.

At the same hour in which the Council met
In Caiaphas' grand hall, this feeble band
Had all assembled. When the sun had set,
And deepest darkness compassed all the land,
And startling omens gleamed on every hand,
Pensive they sat. Oppressive silence reigned ;
Pity herself, embodied, seemed to stand
Amidst the group. Yet none aloud complained,
But long continued mute, and wept with tears unfeigned !

XVI.

Each seemed too much absorbed in his own grief
To realize the presence of the rest ;
Till, from some source impelled to seek relief,
All to the youthful John their looks addressed,
As, to the mother's eye, the babe distressed ;
His heart was formed for friendship's strongest ties ;
He oft had leaned upon his Master's breast,
And caught from Him a love that never dies ;
Hence with imploring look to him they raised their eyes.

XVII.

Deeply he felt their sorrowful appeal,
And grieved to see them smarting with a wound
Which all his kindest efforts could not heal ;
Yet when, with flowing tears, he looked around,
And saw them waiting still, he courage found
To break the silence which their hearts oppressed.
Rising, amid their sighs of grief profound,
Which, from respect to him, they scarce suppressed,
Thus, his sad weeping friends he tenderly addressed !

XVIII.

Small consolation, friends, expect from me !
Balm, for *my own grieved heart*, I seek in vain !
Ah ! whither, then, for succour shall I flee,
When strongly prompted to relieve your pain ?
Our former hopes we never can regain ;
Like plants by chilling winter rendered froze,
They perished when our honoured Lord was slain ;
With Him they all lie buried, and no more
Will they revive again, our courage to restore !

XIX.

We thought He came, commissioned from the skies,
To save our nation from their woes and fears ;
That under Him an empire would arise,
Wide as the earth, and lasting as her years ;
Embracing subjects freed from sorrow's tears ;
We hailed Him, as Messiah, long foretold
By Inspiration's holy, gifted seers ;
And did He not those very traits unfold,
Ascribed to David's Son by all those men of old ?

XX.

What interest in His birth was felt in Heaven !
What import vast annexed to that event !
To one of highest dignity 'twas given
First to announce it. Gabriel was sent
Mary to hail, as, 'neath the firmament,
Most highly favoured among all the fair.
Low, at the angel's words, the virgin bent,
Submitting meekly to that watchful care
Which wide extends o'er all, in ocean, earth and air.

XXI.

Was He not born in Bethlehem, the place
Where first the great Messiah should appear
To bless our land, and show Jehovah's grace ?
And did not watching shepherds instant hear
Sweet strains of music falling on the ear ?
Not such as earth can yield, with all her choirs,
But such as comes from higher, holier sphere !
O ! did not angels, seized with rapture's fires,
Pour music fit for Heaven from all their golden lyres ?

XXII.

And while the simple shepherds heard those strains,
Soft as the zephyr's breath, yet loud and clear,
Rolling their silver waves o'er Bethlehem's plains,
Listening, what message did they plainly hear,
Falling, like Heaven's own accents, on the ear?
Behold, we bring glad tidings of great joy,
Destined to greet all nations, far and near;
In Bethlehem Christ is born, whose blest employ
Shall be to save His friends, and sin and death destroy!

XXIII.

And, ere those public duties He assumed,
Which since His glorious name so wide have spread,
A burning Light arose, which soon illumed
Our darkened land, and purest radiance shed
E'en in the wilderness. Thousands were led
To hail with joy a Light so bright and clear,
And one that seemed from Heaven's own fountain fed.
This light was John, whose voice we oft did hear
Announcing that the Christ would speedily appear.

XXIV.

He, like Elijah, rough in port and mien,
Austere in diet, rigid in his dress,
With thrilling voice and lifted hands, was seen
By anxious thousands in the wilderness,
On whom repentance he did warmly press,
As they would wish to shun a hopeless grave,
Or meet the judgment bar without distress;
Baptizing them in Jordan's rolling wave,
And pointing them to Him who soon would come to save.

XXV.

While thousands on the river's border stood,
Expecting Him of whom the Prophet spake,
Jesus descended to the rolling flood,
And there baptismal rite from John did take.
Nor did He from the stream His exit make
Ere the Pure Spirit from the realms above
Led, for our faith, its mansion to forsake,
Descending, lighted on Him like a dove,
That emblem sweet of peace, and innocence, and love.

XXVI.

Then from the highest heavens a voice was heard,
Which wakened solemn awe in every breast :
This is my Son beloved ; attend His word ;
Own Him as Lord, and be for ever blest ;
For in Him my own Image is expressed !
Thus God did own Him as His very Son,
And thus did His Messiahship attest.
Who could believe, when all this had been done,
The grave could ever hold this great, this spotless One !

XXVII.

Who that beheld it ever can forget
The scene presented on Tiberias' shore,
When He, by eager multitudes beset,
Hungry and faint, and far from their own door,
So greatly multiplied our little store,
As amply to suffice the wants of all ;
Though there were seated in His presence more
E'en than five thousand persons, great and small ?
A feast surpassing far that in Belshazzar's Hall.

XXVIII.

Gorgeous the feast that to his thousand lords
The haughty monarch of Chaldea gave,
Enriched with all that every clime affords,
All that wealth proffers or that taste can crave ;
Beauty was there, to fascinate the brave ;
On gold and silver plate of polish high,
And purple couches, played light's quivering wave,
Thrown from the dazzling lustres beaming nigh,
Or hanging from the dome, which seemed another sky.

XXIX.

Wines rich and sparkling crowned the festive board ;
The mazy dance its witching charm displayed ;
From harp and dulcimer sweet music poured,
And thousand mellow voices lent their aid
To grace the feast which wealth and pomp had made.
Alas ! their noise and mirth and empty show
Served but to stifle conscience, and degrade
Beings designed far higher bliss to know :
Not such those precious gifts our Master did bestow !

XXX.

'Twas on the summit of a lofty hill
That towered above the neighbouring hills around,
Which seemed like swelling waves made fixed and still
By Him who once prescribed the ocean's bound.
Their tops were not by waving forests crowned,
But opened prospect wide on every hand ;
The lake below sent up a murmuring sound
Of dying billows dashed against the land ;
While eastward, Hermon's ridge revealed its summits grand.

XXXI.

Far to the west, and near the azure deep,
Majestic Carmel reared his lonely head ;
Northward, upon its slopes rugged and steep,
Mount Lebanon its verdant cedars spread ;
On all those lofty tops a light was shed,
Which made them seem like curious, glowing eyes,
By interest deep and lowly reverence led,
To gaze upon those wondrous mysteries
Which ravished earth, and filled e'en Heaven with sweet
surprise.

XXXII.

The sun was now declining in the west,
Yet seemed to linger o'er a scene so fair ;
The murmuring winds had sunk to silent rest ;
The birds with softest carols filled the air ;
Rejoicing Nature, as if freed from care,
And fraught with raptures never known before,
Sat listening ; while the Saviour, seated there,
His hands upraised, a blessing to implore,
Ere on the expectant throng His bounty He did pour.

XXXIII.

O ! did it not appear as if the Power
That formed those hills, and spread their carpet green ;
That caused the distant mountain-tops to tower
In ether depths, illumed by glory's sheen ;
That made the Lamp of Heaven to gild the scene ;
That scooped from out the rocks the lake below,
And bade its billows roll or sink serene,
And all its banks as in a mirror show,
Had come to earth, on men His goodness to bestow !

XXXIV.

The waiting thousands from our hands received,
While seated on the grass, in order due,
Enough their craving hunger to relieve,
From loaves but five and fishes only two;
Which still, as we dispensed, in number grew.
It seemed as if our store would never cease,
And that from boundless source supplies we drew;
And yet, when all were bid depart in peace,
Fed to the full, our store had suffered no decrease!

XXXV.

Such was the feast, on the romantic shore
Of that loved lake; where oft, in former years,
We plied our nets, and skimmed its surface o'er
In our light barks. The picture still appears
Graved on my heart, and moistened with my tears!
E'en now I see before me, seated there,
Him who so oft dispelled our anxious fears,
Looking on that vast throng with watchful care,
And tenderness and love, yet with majestic air!

XXXVI.

I see the congregation ranged around,
Scarce conscious of aught else but Him whose eye
Beams on them in deep love. With awe profound
They gaze upon His form. In vain they try
To curb their strong emotions, swelling high.
They bathe in tears the food His hand bestows,
And mingle with it many a grateful sigh;
As if sweet balm were found for all their woes,
And now were closed the source from which their sorrow flows!

XXXVII.

And yet—O can it be?—that form is cold;
That eye is dim that wept o'er human grief;
Those arms, so oft extended to infold
Suffering and want, and minister relief,
Are powerless in the tomb! Our fond belief,
That we had found in Him a changeless Friend,
Has proved unstable as the falling leaf.
Nipt by the frost which the fierce north winds send!
Time to our thickening woes gives promise of no end!

XXXVIII.

How can it be that He, who raised the dead,
And spoiled the King of Terrors of his prey,
Should by that tyrant be a prisoner led,
And in his cold and dreary mansion lay!
What transport filled our bosoms on the day
When Lazarus, from the tomb, obeyed His call!
Could a mere man such wondrous power display?
If more than man, could man procure His fall?
Perplexing doubt, and fear, and darkness, cover all!

XXXIX.

And yet 'tis some relief to view the past,
And meditate upon His former might,
And seizing on His Image, hold it fast,
Till its bright rays pierce through the shades of night,
And shed on our dark path some beams of light!
No other source of comfort now remains;
Our hopes of future bliss have vanished quite!
If balm from his past deeds fond memory gains,
How much this balm we need, to soothe our fears and pains!

XL.

O ! I could dwell upon His acts of love,
Of power, of wisdom, and of tenderness,
Till Time's revolving wheels shall cease to move,
Till (lost in sweet oblivion all distress)
I see Him still alive, still prompt to bless;
Still traversing, on foot, beneath the blaze
Of burning sun, the dreary wilderness,
The vales, the hills ; while grateful thousands gaze,
And bless His healing power, and fill their lips with praise !

XLI.

I see Him now, standing by Lazarus' grave ;
The tears are quivering in His eyes benign ;
From His warm heart sweet Pity rolls her wave ;
Not like our selfish tears, but drops divine—
Purer than rays that from the diamond shine !
The sisters weep ; the friends and neighbours weep !
For Lazarus was a gem from mercy's mine :
He loved to do a favour, loved to keep
A bed on which our Lord, when worn with toil, might sleep.

XLII.

The sisters weep ; for they have closed the eyes
Of a fond brother and a faithful friend ;
Have heard his parting words, his latest sighs ;
In silent death have seen his sorrows end ;
And now in grief, before his tomb, they bend ;
They have no hope that he will rise again,
Till the Archangel's trump its peal shall send
To every ear, and sunder death's strong chain,
And bid his prisoners rise to endless bliss or pain !

XLIII.

But Martha, Mary, wipe away your tears !
Jesus is present. You have loved Him well.
With you, he oft has found a home for years,
Delighted that beneath your roof did dwell
Hearts that for One so scorned with love could swell !
Food you have given Him ; quenched His burning thirst ;
When weary, way-worn, His fatigue to quell,
Have granted him repose. Among the first,
Oft have ye sheltered Him whom others only cursed !

XLIV.

Can He forget your love, your tender care ?
Can He His powerful sympathy withhold ?
While He stands weeping, yield not to despair ;
More to be valued are those drops than gold.
Now let the stone, He says, away be rolled !
Lazarus, come forth ! aloud salutes our ears ;
Instant reluctant Death ungrasps his hold,
And, wrapped in grave clothes, Lazarus appears,
And bids his mourning friends dry up their gushing tears.

XLV.

Four days had passed since life had met its close ;
The process of corruption had begun ;
Yet, when from Death's dark chamber he arose,
And stood in view, beneath the smiling sun,
O'er his fair form had Death no triumphs won ;
He showed no marks of sickness or decay !
As toil-worn labourer, when his task is done,
Retires to rest, to sleep his cares away,
And rises up refreshed, to hail the coming day ;

XLVI.

Thus rises Lazarus, with vigorous frame,
A ruddy cheek, a vivid, sparkling eye ;
In countenance, in features, just the same
As when, in blooming health, his pulse beat high !
His joyful sisters to his bosom fly,
And hang upon his neck with transport sweet :
Then turn they to Death's Conqueror, standing nigh,
And lowly bending at His sacred feet,
In grateful accents thus His glorious name repeat :

XLVII.

O Saviour ! mighty to dispel the gloom
Which wraps the soul in darkness and despair ;
Thy powerful voice has triumphed o'er the tomb,
And kindled hope for those who slumber there !
O how unworthy of Thy tender care
And love are we ! What tribute shall we yield ?
What thanks bestow ? What gifts with thine compare !
What power, what tenderness hast Thou revealed !
Eyes that were closed in death, Thou kindly hast unsealed !

XLVIII.

A noble treasure lost hast Thou restored !
A precious gem, in fragments, rendered whole !
A bleeding wound, with tender hand, explored,
And balm applied to heal the fainting soul !
Sorrow's deep wave has felt thy strong control,
And, while it tossed in billows dark and high,
Has, at thy powerful bidding, ceased to roll !
Henceforth, when grief assails, to Thee we'll fly,
Nor fear its rude assaults, Saviour, when Thou art nigh !

XLIX.

Thus the rejoicing sisters fondly poured,
From grateful, swelling hearts, their notes of praise
To Him, their benefactor, and adored
The power and love that from the dead could raise
One who had been the solace of their days.
The sympathizing friends that stood around,
Their joy discovered, in a thousand ways,
Mingled with awe and reverence profound
For Him, whose voice could reach those slumbering 'neath
the ground.

L.

Yet, O! that voice in death is silent now ;
The form we loved is like the blighted flower !
Strange that the Conqueror of Death should bow
Beneath the conquered, withered by his power !
When shall these clouds disperse, that o'er us lower
And wrap us in a night that knows no dawn ?
Our sky seems gathering blackness every hour ;
No source remains, whence help can now be drawn ;
Sweet hope has spread her wings, and is for ever gone !

LI.

Yet his loved memory I will cherish still ;
Death cannot take from me that pleasure sweet ;
And every intimation of His will,
With promptitude and highest joy I'll meet ;
And this my purpose nothing shall defeat.
Deep are those words engraved upon my mind,
Which from His dying lips my ear did greet :
Behold thy mother. Yes, my Master kind,
The mother whom Thou lov'dst in me a friend shall find !

LII.

Thine ear, so open once to all, is sealed ;
Thy heart, so sensitive, has ceased to beat ;
My love to Thee no more can be revealed ;
Death hath conveyed Thee to his dark retreat,
And sadly ended all our converse sweet ;
But she whom once Thou didst so warmly love,
In my own home my presence oft shall meet,
And there her deeply wounded heart shall prove
All that this hand can do her sorrows to remove !

LIII.

The spear that pierced Thy heart, her own did pierce,
And wakened griefs that time can never end :
Still swell upon her soul those billows fierce
That swept away her best, her dearest Friend :
Small comfort for her woes can friendship lend.
She weeps in memory of those moments blest,
When o'er Thy cradle pillow she did bend,
And view Thee smiling in Thy peaceful rest,
While on Thine infant brow her lips of love were pressed.

LIV.

She thinks of Thee as when, in early years,
Thou yieldedst prompt obedience to her will ;
Nor ever oped the fountain of her tears,
By look, or word, or deed. She sees Thee still,
As robed in childhood's beauty, and a thrill
Of transport feels ; but O ! how soon suppressed
By the sad thought that thy young smiles will fill
Her heart with joy no more ! Bereaved, unblest,
With Thee, in the cold grave, her hopes in darkness rest !

LV.

Be it my sweet employ to soothe her grief,
Her fears to quell, her every want supply,
And in the hour of suffering grant relief,
Till death at length shall come, her tears to dry;
Then fondly will I watch her fading eye,
Receive her latest breath, her eyelids close,
And with her Son, who on the cross did die,
Will lay her precious dust in calm repose,
There to forget her toils, her sorrows, and her woes!

LVI.

But O! my own sad heart is bursting now!
Sweet Friend and Comforter, when shall I hear
Thy voice of love again? Reveal thy brow,
Calm and majestic! O! the cruel spear
Has pierced Thy side! I see Thy blood appear,
Rushing in crimson tide! Yes, thou art dead!
Weep, friends; restrain not now the gushing tear!
By the fond memory of his kindness led,
Pour forth the streams of grief o'er hopes for ever fled!

LVII.

Thus, while his hearers sit with streaming eyes,
And listen to the silver tones that fall
From John's persuasive lips, in vain he tries
To quell their grief; for they have lost their all,
And know of none, on whom they now can call
For succour in their hour of deepest woe!
And yet 'tis sweet, when gathering ills appal,
To mingle tears with tears, in kindred flow.
This, now, is all the joy these sorrowing ones can know!

LVIII.

He ceased. While silent still remain the rest,
Matthew, reluctant, rises from his seat,
Thus to relieve by speech his struggling breast ;
While all with cordial looks his presence greet,
Well pleased to sit and listen at his feet :
Dear friends, the future promises no ray,
Through its dark gloom, our longing eyes to meet ;
The past presents to us a gleam of day ;
Would that its hallowed light could charm our griefs away !

LIX.

Is it a dream ? 'Tis too divinely sweet
Ever in cold oblivion's shade to lie !
But 'tis no dream ! A thousand memories meet,
And rush upon my soul, and seize my eye ;
Nor will their recollection ever die !
We once possessed a Friend, whose accents bland
Could thrill the soul, suppress the mourner's sigh,
Arrest the tide of grief ; with gentle hand
Heal all the forms of woe, wide scattered o'er our land !

LX.

I was a Publican. How much defamed
Was this my occupation, is well known ;
My friends, my countrymen, were all ashamed
Of one who thus the Roman sway could own,
Under whose weight our sacred nation groan.
Avarice, oppression, oft this station filled ;
No virtues for its guilt could hence atone ;
To those who held it every heart was chilled,
As if their very sight disgrace and woe distilled !

LXI.

'Twas love of wealth that led me to despise
The charms of social life, and fearless brave
The scorn that sparkled in a thousand eyes ;
Hence, in Capernaum, near Tiberias' wave,
I sought that wealth, which often proves the grave
Of all that's virtuous, lovely and divine,
And renders man of sin the willing slave !
The end proposed was gained ; riches were mine ;
But I was poor in gifts which gold itself outshine !

LXII.

Despised by others, I despised myself ;
Blest with abundance, I was in distress ;
And felt how powerless is the love of self
To soothe the heart which guilt and fear oppress.
At length, the Saviour, full of tenderness
For all the wretched, fixed on me His eyes ;
He looked with pity, and resolved to bless ;
He called me to His side. O ! the surprise,
The joy, the ardent love, which in my heart did rise !

LXIII.

The sting of guilt was in a moment gone ;
The love of riches from my bosom fled ;
Quickly those gathering clouds were all withdrawn
Which threatened future vengeance on my head.
Relieved from present woe and coming dread,
I left my calling, overjoyed to find
A Friend, whose very presence instant shed
Sweet peace and hope upon my darkened mind.
Forthwith I followed Him, leaving my all behind.

LXIV.

With pity touched for men, like me, despised,
And for their very office vilified,
All possible expedients I devised
To bring them to my honoured Master's side,
Lest still in guilt and woe they should abide ;
Hence for these men an ample feast was spread.
All were invited. None refused, from pride,
The invitation. At the table's head
That wondrous Prophet sat, who oft hath raised the dead.

LXV.

We feasted ; but the food that charmed our taste
Was not the plenty that was scattered there ;
Often was that forgotten, in our haste
To seize the bread of life, that, free as air,
Fell from the lips of Him, whose generous care
Never despised the hungry, fainting soul ;
Who bade not e'en the publican despair,
But on that arm his sins and burdens roll,
Which could, with perfect ease, Nature herself control.

LXVI.

That He should seek such company, should feel
A tender pity for the poor and vile ;
Should, led by no reward, consult the weal
Of all the sons of want, aroused the bile
Of those who claimed respect for rank and style,
Yet true nobility had never known.
But why not rescue men from Satan's wile ?
Does not Jehovah, from His lofty throne,
Bend to embrace the poor, and make their cause his own ?

LXVII.

Christ was the Friend of sinners ; greatly loved
The wretched publicans, so much decried !
This much is true, as I myself have proved ;
Else me He ne'er had summoned to his side,
But guilty I had lived, and hopeless died !
What greater glory can His name acquire ?
Oh ! how I long to publish, far and wide,
His love to me !—to seize an angel's lyre,
And pour, from all its strings, His praise, with Seraph's fire.

LXVIII.

True, He is dead, and never more, below,
Will the poor publican, with reverence, hear
The words of kind instruction sweetly flow
From lips that wakened hope and scattered fear,
And rendered pleasant e'en the falling tear
Which told of penitence and love within !
No ! never can he catch His listening ear,
And be assured from Him of pardoned sin !
Never renew those scenes of bliss that once have been !

LXIX.

And yet I cannot now indulge regret
That, summoned by His voice, I heard his call ;
That, by ten thousand anxious cares beset,
I rose, and at His bidding left them all.
Regret I cannot, whatsoe'er befall ;
So rich the blessing showered upon my head,
So sweet deliverance from my former thrall,
That I must love Him still, living or dead ;
Death cannot quench the love which on my heart is shed !

LXX.

'Tis joy to think His spirit cannot die,
But, called at length to some far holier sphere,
Now reigns triumphant there, in glory high ;
No more annoyed, as when he lingered here,
By thorny crown, fell scourge, and cruel spear ;
Ah ! pleasant 'tis to think, though now distressed
And whelmed in grief, that the glad moment's near,
When the poor publican will be at rest,
And find himself, at last, in His loved presence blest !

LXXI.

And yet how passing strange His death appears !
What angel's mind the mystery can disclose ?
O'er earth and Hell He triumphed, and for years
Defied the machinations of His foes ;
In vain against his life in wrath they rose.
E'en when arraigned, condemned, and hung on high,
And tortured deep with agonizing woes,
Why did not angels, summoned from the sky,
Make all his cruel foes in dread confusion fly ?

LXXII.

E'en in that gloomy hour, when darkness spread
Its dreadful curtain o'er the mid-day sun,
And earth, convulsed, disclosed her slumbering dead,
And rocks were riven, we had not yet begun
To indulge the thought that all His work was done !
We then expected that He would descend
From that dire cross, and, on each guilty one
That mocked and scorned, a storm of wrath would send,
Fierce with red bolts of death, and woes that never end !

LXXIII.

Ye all remember well the power He showed
When we were tossed upon the stormy lake ;
'Mid winds and billows fierce in vain we rowed ;
The dreadful tempest made our vessel shake ;
At every moment life was held in stake.
Exhausted with His toils He lay asleep,
Enjoying rest, such as sweet infants take,
When cradled on the breast of those who keep
Maternal watch and care, lest, waking, they should weep.

LXXIV.

O'erwhelmed with fear of death, which seemed so nigh,
With one accord we all His face did seek,
And stood impressed with awe to see Him lie
So calm and peaceful, undisturbed and meek.
The hue of innocence was on His cheek,
As if His soul were wrapped in Paradise !
Loud were the tones which winds and waves did speak,
Yet, as if safe from peril or surprise,
Waked not from slumber deep those calm, benignant eyes !

LXXV.

Save, Lord ! we perish ! was our earnest cry,
When He, who had not heard the raging storm,
Nor startled at the shock of billows high,
Calm and serene, without the least alarm,
Awaking, raised His awe-inspiring arm ;
Peace, winds and waves ! Ye elements be still !
He said, and Nature, yielding to the charm
Of His all-powerful voice, obeyed His will ;
While mingled love and awe our grateful bosoms thrill.

LXXVI.

Calm and unruffled lies the mighty deep,
Spread, like a silver mirror, to our sight;
Pillowed upon its breast the tempests sleep,
As resting, after toil, with sweet delight;
While we, relieved from peril and affright,
Survey, with admiration, the broad main;
Impressed with solemn reverence at the might
Which thus its angry billows could restrain,
And bid them quiet rest, and peaceful smile again.

LXXVII.

Who, then, could doubt, but that the Prince of Peace
Had entered on His mission in our world?
Had come to bid our sins and sorrows cease?
That soon His standard wide would be unfurled,
And all His guilty foes to ruin hurled?
O! who was He, that could thus calmly lie,
While all around the crested billows curled;
Yet rose, and hushed the tempest, pealing high,
And bade the tossing waves without a murmur die?

LXXVIII.

Yet now He rests in sleep, still more profound
Than when He slumbered on the stormy sea;
While waves and tempests raved and thundered round!
No more to His loved presence can we flee,
In peril's hour, whate'er that peril be!
His voice is hushed in death! Ah! sad the day,
Sweet friends, companions dear, to you and me,
When He, by ruffian hands was torn away,
And in this stormy world left us alone to stray!

LXXIX.

He ceased. None rose, the conference to prolong.
A solemn pause ensued. No sound was heard ;
Save that, from one, amidst the mournful throng,
Whose ardent temperament was deeply stirred,
Repeated sighs burst forth, while not a word
Disclosed their cause. 'Twas Peter, wrapped in grief
And fond remembrance of his buried Lord.
At length his sorrowing bosom sought relief
In these impassioned words, which closed the silence brief:

LXXX.

Look not on me with eyes so full of love,
Me, the most undeserving of you all ;
I do not rise your sympathy to prove,
But to express deep sorrow for my fall.
O ! how can I my grievous fault recall,
And still expect your friendship to possess !
Him, who delivered me from sinful thrall,
When all had fled and left Him in distress,
I wickedly denied ! What can my guilt express !

LXXXI.

Him I denied, not merely once or twice—
E'en such denial I could ill excuse—
The deed of treachery was repeated thrice,
And that, in terms of horrid oaths profuse !
So kind a Friend, how could I thus abuse !
I shrank before the tauntings of a maid,
A simple girl of low and grovelling views ;
And thus my glorious Lord, who needed aid,
Ungrateful I forsook, of shame and loss afraid !

LXXXII.

What greatly aggravates this grievous crime,
And gives it colours of the darkest hue,
Is the reflection that, at previous time,
He, who full well the coming future knew,
Had warned me that I soon should prove untrue.
This warning I despised, and made reply,
Reposing on my strength, a trust undue :
Though all men should forsake Thee, yet not I !
Alas ! that after this my Lord I should deny !

LXXXIII.

When thrice had been performed the dreadful deed,
The look He gave me, I can ne'er forget :
It pierced my soul, and caused my heart to bleed ;
Deep graven there remains its memory yet.
Its import was: Peter, is this the debt
Due to your Master when in deep distress ?
From me, what treatment have you ever met
Which merits such return ? I love to bless,
And not to injure you ! Pray more, and promise less !

LXXXIV.

It was a look of love and pity, joined
With friendly admonition. Straight I stole,
From every human eye. That look, so kind,
Still followed me, and thrilled my very soul ;
Causing, from eyes of grief, swift tears to roll.
Bitter my woes ; and yet I felt relieved
From sorrows which before defied control ;
For still that look would whisper, while I grieved :
Peter, thou art forgiven, nor of my love bereaved !

LXXXV.

Still, I lament, in memory of that hour ;—
My conduct then was but a sad return
For those displays of wisdom, love and power,
Which, witnessed oft, had caused my heart to burn
With grateful love ; for never did he spurn
My cry for needed help. Witness the night,
So dark and fearful ; causing deep concern
Lest the rough waves should overwhelm us quite ;
While He whom we revered was absent from our sight.

LXXXVI.

Well do ye know He taught us all to pray,
With confidence and love to lift our eye
To Him who kindles up the light of day,
And spreads the veil of darkness o'er the sky ;
Causes the rains to fall, the clouds to fly ;
Clothes the white lily ; feeds the fowls of air ;
And, while He reigns in Heaven exalted high,
Does not confine His love and pity there,
But gives, to all that need, His kind and constant care.

LXXXVII.

He taught us all to bend before His throne,
And with a broken heart our sins confess,
Freely to make our wants and burdens known
To Him who loves the contrite heart to bless,
And kindly sends deliverance in distress.
Sweet are the lessons which He thus has taught ;
As oft we feel in this dark wilderness,
With fear and peril and temptation fraught ;—
Who has no Friend in Heaven, can find a friend in nought !

LXXXVIII.

Not such His lessons merely. What He taught
He loved to practise. When His gracious hand
Had fed the thousands who His presence sought ;
And when, in deference to His command,
They had dispersed, He sent us from the land,
And bade us cross the lake ; while He withdrew
On distant solitary mount to stand ;
And there, entirely hid from human view,
Bow at the throne of Him, the Holy, Just and True.

LXXXIX.

And much He needed solace ; for His heart
Was burdened with the woes He would relieve,
And often pierced by Envy's cruel dart.
Those most He pitied who would not receive
His proffered kindness ; who would not believe
His power to heal and bless them. Hence, His prayer
For all whom sin and suffering caused to grieve,
On distant mountain, through the midnight air,
Rose ardent up to Heaven, and found sweet welcome there.

XC.

How often, when I knew He was retired,
And holding converse with the Unseen One,
The Source of Light and Love, have I desired
To stand and hear, and drink in every tone
Of warm, confiding love, that sought the Throne,
Or of deep sorrow that found audience there !
Had spotless angels His retirement known,
How swift from Heaven their wings had pierced the air,
To find the blessed spot where Jesus bowed in prayer !

XCI.

Never, since Eden's holiness and bliss
Forsook this world, and found their home in Heaven,
Has earth beheld devotion such as this ;
So pure, confiding, free from all the leaven
Of human frailty ! Not the worship, even,
Of Seraphs, burning with celestial fires,
To whose untiring spirits it is given
Never to rest, or drop their golden lyres,
To such exalted heights, such ardent love, aspires !

XCII.

Not by a ladder, thronged by angels bright,
Connecting earth and Heaven, did Jesus hold
Transporting converse with the world of light,
While, on eternal might, His burden rolled.
All Heaven, to His inspection, did unfold
Its beauty, wisdom, rectitude and love ;
Nor did He need angelic harps of gold,
To raise His pure affections far above
All that our thoughts conceive, or angels ever prove.

XCIII.

Thus prayed the Saviour, on the mount afar,
While we were tossed upon the stormy sea,
Vainly conflicting, in unequal war,
With winds and waves, and not from danger free.
He who could bid all fear of peril flee,
Had left us thus to row and toil alone,
That, conscious of our weakness we might be,
And more disposed our need of help to own,
When all our hopes from self were crushed and overthrown.

XCIV.

And now, in useless labour and distress
Most of this cheerless night had passed away ;
Nor could we hope our perils would be less,
Or less our toils, until the coming day
Should on our darkness shed its cheering ray ;
When, through the mist, we dimly caught the sight
Of moving form that filled us with dismay.
It seemed approaching. Pallid with affright,
We viewed it as some ghost, haunting the shades of night.

XCV.

It had no solid ground on which to stand,
But, on the crested billows of the sea,
Which wildly tossed and leaped on every hand—
As playful lambs, when from the fold set free,
O'er verdant meadows bound with sportive glee—
On stormy waves it walked, enrobed in night ;
In vain we longed from sight so dread to flee,
For we had neither courage left, nor might.
A spirit! we exclaimed, all pale with wild affright!

XCVI.

O! sweet the words that scattered all our fear :
Cheer up, desponding hearts, for it is I.
Yes! 'twas our loving Master drawing near !
Soon as His soothing voice had hushed our cry,
I longed to His extended arms to fly.
I asked the precious boon ; that boon He gave ;
But when I saw the billows rolling high
My fears prevailed ; I sunk into the wave,
And, but for His kind hand, had found a watery grave !

XCVII.

O! why, said Jesus, while my hand He took,
Why doubt of Him who can the floods command?
Henceforth to me, your Strength, with courage look,
Nor ever think without my help to stand,
When trials fierce and dangers are at hand.
Then, safely in our little bark received,
Without an interval we gained the strand.
Such is the Master whom I sorely grieved,
Though from the fear of death my soul He had relieved!

XCVIII.

Could I but pour my sorrows in His ear,
And tell Him with what bitterness I grieve
Over that foolish and unmanly fear,
Which led me to deny Him, and receive
His kind forgiveness, much it would relieve
My burdened heart; but oh! that ear is cold!
That mighty hand that did such deeds achieve
Is withered of its power! In Death's strong hold
Lies that majestic form which winds and waves controlled!

XCIX.

Alas! dear friends, who now shall soothe our woe?
Who, amid perils, shall dispel our fears?
Who to our orphan'd hearts shall kindness show?
Who, in the hour of sadness, wipe our tears?
Earth yields no friends, and none from Heaven appears:
In sorrow we must live while here we stay;
Deep darkness rests on all our future years:
Nothing but death can drive our griefs away—
No hope but that remains to shed one cheering ray.

C.

Thus spake the man to whom his Master gave
The name of Rock—importing with what high
And vigorous purpose he would nobly brave
The toils and dangers which his faith should try,
When summoned for his Master dear to die.
Alas ! that Rock, like Horeb's rock of old,
When Israel's sons for cooling stream did cry,
Was smitten now, and from its crevice rolled
A tide of bitter tears, that could not be controlled !

CI.

All weep, indeed, in sympathetic grief;
All mourn the loss of Him they loved so well:
Each from the others vainly seeks relief;
For, while on scenes departed long they dwell,
And each in turn fondly essays to tell
Some well remembered scene, some deed of love,
Each tender tale but makes their sorrows swell;
No art, no power but that which reigns above,
Can from their grieving hearts the crushing load remove !

CII.

Leaving these poor disciples wrapped in night,
Which nought can scatter but the Saviour's smile,
To higher regions let us bend our flight,
And, 'mid its living splendours pause awhile—
Like sailor, after storm, on happy isle
Seeking repose from winds and billows high.
Give wings, O Spirit, to an insect vile,
Who fain above earth's transient scenes would fly,
And seek the Throne of Him who fills immensity !



CANTO IV.

THE SUMMONS.

CANTO IV.

THE SUMMONS.

ANALYSIS.

Apostrophe to Hope.—Unusual solemnity in Heaven.—Description of the celestial world, its inhabitants, its scenery, &c.—A cloud collected around the Sacred Hill, and spreading its shadow on every side.—Angels and glorified spirits summoned around the Eternal Throne.—Informed that the treatment lately experienced by the Messiah is the cause of the preternatural solemnity.—Why that treatment was permitted.—Required to resort to His sepulchre, and witness His resurrection, and then publish His triumph throughout the universe.—Dispersion of the cloud from the precincts of the throne.—Rapture of the Heavenly hosts.—Their song of praise.—Their expedition to the Sepulchre.—Dispersion of the dense cloud from the earth, at their approach.—Terror of the Infernal Powers, and flight to Hell.—Celestial armies arranged around the Saviour's tomb.

HOPE.

O GENTLE, lovely power, whose presence mild
Wakes into life the infant's fond desire,
Soothes the warm feelings of the artless child,
And kindles in the youthful heart the fire
That never dies, till life itself expire ;
All bow in willing homage to thy charms,
And, with impassioned love, thy gifts admire ;
All brave the direst perils and alarms,
To win thy witching smile, and clasp thee in their arms !

Thy countenance, how lovely and serene !
Thine eye, how strong to pierce the shades of night !
Thou art ever pointing to some distant scene,

Some smiling landscape, robed in beauty bright ;
Some sweet enchanting Eden of delight ;
Some happy isle, reposing far away,
Where every welcome object meets the sight,
And peace and bliss make their perpetual stay ;
Some fairy scene, o'er which shines an eternal day.

Sweet solace of our woes, thou dost not scorn
The meanest or the lowest ; but dost smile
As well upon the wretched and forlorn,
Whom pampered pride and tyranny revile,
As on the sons of wealth and rank and style,
Whom fortune favours and the world admires ;
None but the hardened, caught in error's wile,
And lost to pure and virtuous desires,
Dost thou desert. To such alone, thy lamp expires.

The prisoner, grieving in his gloomy cell,
The sailor, traversing the stormy sea,
The soldier, bidding his loved home farewell,
The slave, in chains, pining for liberty,
A solace to their woes derive from thee.
The mother o'er her child, with love unknown,
Bending, as with the eye of prophecy,
Sees him, with gold and diamonds round him strewn,
Or seated by thy hand upon a regal throne.

Our fondest relatives and dearest friends,
Bound to our hearts by nature's strongest ties ;
Yes, all the loved ones Heaven in pity sends,
To mitigate our toils, and hush our sighs,
May soon be snatched for ever from our eyes,
And leave us desolate and lonely here ;
But thou art such a friend as never dies.
On earth thy presence cheers our pathway drear,
And meets us, after death, in some far higher sphere.

When torn, at last, from this our transient home,
And called to slumber with the silent dead,
Then, like a pensive mourner, thou dost come,
And sit upon the turf that heaps our bed,
As if by love's instinctive influence led
To watch the precious clay long held so dear ;
Thus o'er the Saviour's tomb thou didst outspread
Thy silver wings, dropping soft pity's tear ;
Waiting till, from the dead, the Conqueror should appear.

Nor dost thou watch our sleeping dust in vain !
Sure as the Saviour triumphed o'er the grave,
He'll burst asunder every captive's chain,
And over death subdued his banner wave ;
Giving full proof that He has power to save.
The dust, which thou hast watched, will then arise
To hail thy smile, nor longer made a slave
To tyrant Death, will soar beyond the skies,
With thee to dwell, where tears never bedim the eyes.

I.

Wake, harp divine ! wake, tuneful numbers sweet !
Wake ; all ye powers of song, and raise the soul
To Heaven's exalted sphere, the chosen seat
Of Him, beneath whose eye harmonious roll
Millions of blooming worlds ; while yet the whole,
Compared with their Creator and their Head,
Who holds them subject to His wise control,
Is like the down on insect's wing outspread :
But soft ! the Son of God still slumbers with the dead !

II.

The more than midnight resting on His tomb,
Not only wraps the earth, but shades the skies ;
The whole creation shares the general gloom ;
The angelic hosts are seized with sad surprise,
As if Heaven's light were fading from their eyes.
Silence prevails ; no longer they delight
In joyous anthems and sweet melodies ;
The scenes that once beamed glorious, on their sight
The wonted flush of joy no longer can excite !

III.

Heaven is that central world, where love divine,
Power without limits, fixed regard for right,
And wisdom infinite, most clearly shine.
There all these attributes at once unite
To form an Eden of intense delight,
Which knows no end, admits of no decay,
Excludes all sorrow, banishes from sight
All sin and shame, and scatters perfect day
O'er all its blissful scenes, which never pass away.

IV.

There dwell for ever in consummate bliss,
Angels, Archangels, Cherubs, Seraphs bright ;
While Thrones, Dominions, Principalities
And Powers majestic, based on truth and right,
Yield willing homage to their peerless might.
There dwell the Patriarchs and Prophets old,
And all the ransomed robed in purest white,
Holding green palms, and wearing crowns of gold.
To all these Sons of Light, Heaven's splendours are unrolled.

V.

Pure, active and immortal, filled with love
And holy zeal, these spirits never tire ;
By swift obedience constantly they prove
Their loyalty to Him whom they admire,
And worship with devotion's hallowed fire.
His works and ways they actively explore ;
Each fresh discovery wakens new desire,
With still increasing fervour, to adore
And praise the great I Am, and serve him ever more.

VI.

They have no temple, to exclusive rites
Of worship rendered sacred, where they meet
In solemn reverence to explore the heights
And depths of love divine ; where, at the feet
Of Heaven's Eternal King they take their seat,
Or lowly bow, or in prostration lie ;
His glorious presence every where they greet
With filial gratitude and rapture high,
Whether they humbly bow, or through Creation fly.

VII.

Their only temple is unbounded space,
Roofed, paved and lighted, and on every side
Compassed with worlds running their ceaseless race,
And darting lustre through Creation wide,
Themselves faint emanations from the tide
Of boundless, fathomless, essential Light ;
Their only altars are those hearts, whence pride
And sinful lusts and aims are banished quite—
Hearts most sincere and pure, benevolent and right.

VIII.

Within that temple, e'en to angels' eyes,
No form or image visible resides ;
In vain the loftiest Archangel tries
To see the great Invisible ; He hides
Within the cloud which round His Throne abides ;
Or in the Light that none can pierce, He dwells ;
Or on the whirlwind's wing in triumph rides ;
Or by the lightning's gleam His presence tells ;
Or by His loving smile, which the fierce storm dispels.

IX.

Where matter has existence, He exists ;
He formed it, and upholds it by His hand.
Where there is mind, sensation, love or bliss,
Thought, memory, reason, power to understand
The right, the wrong, the beautiful, the grand—
By them He makes His glorious presence known,
For they exist but by His high command ;
In empty space, where none of these are shown,
He lives unseen, and reigns eternal and alone.

X.

'Neath the survey of His omniscient eye
All finite grandeur, wisdom, glory, might,
Are like the motes that in the sunbeams fly ;
They shrink to less than nothing in His sight.
Newton, while soaring amid worlds of light,
Gathered less science from the starry plains,
Though by his triumphs filled with keen delight,
Than that which every insect's form contains—
Known but to Him who made its muscles, heart and veins.

XI.

His home is every where ; and where He lives
He reigns supreme in justice, wisdom, might,
Benevolence and love, and constant gives
Display of His attachment to the right ;
Yet, as of old, He showed His glory bright
In Jewish temple, on the Mercy Seat,
Excluded ever from the intrusive sight
Of eyes profane, and there in love did greet
The atoning Priest, who came and worshipped at His feet ;

XII.

So, in the highest Heaven, on Sacred Hill,
Dwells His resplendent presence, beaming there
Brighter than thousand suns. Blest angels fill,
Oft, the surrounding space, yet scarcely dare
Approach the vivid light. Nearer repair
The strong-eyed Cherubim, and hovering round,
Or poised on wing, behold with reverent air
The Mercy Seat, with radiant glory crowned,
With strong desire to learn its mysteries profound.

XIII.

Their new discoveries they announce to all
The shining hosts, in notes of loftiest praise ;
Then low, before the radiant glory, fall
These happy spirits ; sweet and joyful lays
Burst forth from golden harps ; and cheering rays
Of love divine, issue, on every side,
From that effulgence which the Unseen displays ;
From heart to heart, throughout the circle wide,
New and transporting joys flow on, in ceaseless tide.

XIV.

Forth from the Sapphire Throne issues a stream
Of crystal purity, transparent, sweet,
Refreshing, giving life. Its waters gleam
In sunny radiance beneath the Seat
Of glory inconceivable. They meet
And satisfy the ever fresh desires
Of spirits deathless. Oft, on pinions fleet,
Rush to its verdant banks the angel choirs,
And from its sparkling waves drink bliss that ne'er expires.

XV.

Now winds this lucid stream through sylvan scene
Of soft enchantment, where blest spirits stray
'Mid beauteous groves, with foliage ever green,
And golden fruits that suffer no decay ;
Among the leaves celestial zephyrs play,
Causing soft melodies to fill the ear ;
Here no malignant spirits make their stay ;
No dancing Satyrs or rough Fauns appear—
Nothing to dampen joy, or waken grief or fear.

XVI.

And now it rolls its pure and radiant tide
Through meads with undecaying verdure spread,
And starred with flowers that bloom on every side,
Never to fade or droop their beauteous head ;
Flowers of all hues that sweetest fragrance shed.
No thorn or thistle finds admittance there ;
Nor rank and bitter weeds ; but, in their stead,
Spontaneous flourish, without thought or care,
All that can please the eye, or sweetly scent the air.

XVII.

Now it divides, and subdividing still,
In endless forms of beauty, grows no less
Than where it issues from the Sacred Hill.
It forms unnumbered streams and rills, to bless,
To gladden, and to cheer the world of holiness.
Oft some of these beneath the surface roll,
And, gushing up in fountains, seem to press
Attendant spirits, as from golden bowl,
Pure nectar to imbibe, transporting to the soul.

XVIII.

Nor wanting, in Heaven's boundless landscape fair,
Broad, endless avenues, with cooling shade.
Refreshing grotts, delightful bowers are there,
For calm retreat and contemplation made,
And towering hill and slope and forest glade ;
All forms of taste and loveliness appear,
In robes of immortality arrayed,
To gladden those, who, in this blissful sphere,
Enjoy the smile of God through an eternal year.

XIX.

Around the Throne, beneath the emerald skies,
Starred bright with gems from Heaven's exhaustless mine,
The Bow of Peace reveals its brilliant dyes ;
Angels rejoice while they behold the sign
That Mercy and Truth with equal lustre shine ;
But saints, in snowy robes, raise loftier strains
Of gratitude and joy. The rays divine
From Mercy's Bow remind them of the pains,
Rescued from which, by grace, they roam the ethereal plains.

XX.

The sun, whose presence gladdens our low sphere,
Imparting life and warmth on every shore
Of earth's small globe, is never wanted here.
No moon or stars their feeble lustre pour,
To gild those scenes which beam for ever more,
Divinely beautiful, intensely bright,
Beneath the smile of Him whom all adore ;
On all its realms of unsurpassed delight
The face of God sheds day, succeeded by no night.

XXI.

Sin, with its raging passions, griefs and fears,
Its guilt, remorse, distraction and despair,
Never within its precincts blest appears,
To infect with poison its immortal air,
And wither all its flowers divinely fair.
No groans of anguish mingle with its lays
Of love and joy, and no intrusive care
Impedes the current of its ceaseless praise.
Purity, peace and bliss, shed their benignant rays.

XXII.

To the cold ear of sense, this world so fair,
Beaming with radiant forms that never fade
Or feel decay ; fanned by immortal air
That knows no cloud, or mist ; by Goodness made
To be the abode of light without a shade,
Of bliss without alloy, and without end ;—
To those whom nothing but their senses aid,
This happy world would few attractions lend ;
Not such to those who view Jehovah as their Friend !

XXIII.

Nor such to Him who formed it; on His ear
Eternal melodies incessant flow
From all its objects; from Life's river clear;
From leaves of trees that on its borders grow;
From flowers that wave where whispering zephyrs blow;
From the soft ripple of its purling rills;
From the sweet gushing founts that upward throw
Their pearly showers, o'er all the vales and hills;—
From these, on His pleased ear sweet melody distils.

XXIV.

Millions of shining worlds that float in space,
In perfect harmony with His design,
While, with unfailing constancy, they trace
Those paths allotted by His hand divine,
Nor for one moment from their course decline,
Form a grand chorus to resound His praise.
Their swift and steady movements all combine
To fill immensity, through endless days,
With praises, to His ear more sweet than Seraph's lays.

XXV.

But, chiefly, from the hearts of spirits blest
He hears sweet strains. Their holy, warm desires;
Their active, rapid thoughts, that never rest;
Their love, that keeps alive devotion's fires;
Their gratitude; their zeal that never tires;
Their rich delight in all His works sublime;
Their promptness to fulfil what He requires,
Pour on His ear music unknown to time.
Would that its tones could fill our world of woe and crime!

XXVI.

All holy hearts, whose feelings and desires
Are perfectly subjected to His will,
Are emblems beautiful of golden lyres,
Whose well-tuned chords, touched by the Hand of skill,
Each listening ear with sweetest music fill.
Thus, He who reigns throughout Creation wide,
And beams in glory on the Sacred Hill,
From sources numberless, on every side,
Hears waves of melody roll on, in ceaseless tide.

XXVII.

Those who are, like Himself, for ever pure,
Within whose hearts no jarring passions rise,
Whom no seductive influence can allure
To trample on the laws that rule the skies,
Are constantly entranced with melodies.
From all within themselves, from all around,
As flowing from a fount that never dries,
Enchanting music rolls its swelling sound,
Filling the enraptured soul with peace and joy profound.

XXVIII.

Alas ! that in a world so pure and bright,
Should echo other strains than those of joy !
What can arrest the tide of strong delight,
'Mid scenes disclosing nothing to annoy ?
Why not, as erst, both harp and tongue employ
To roll the waves of rapture through the skies ?
Is not the bliss of Heaven without alloy ?
Why, then, do plaintive tones of sadness rise,
Which seem to call for tears from angels' radiant eyes ?

XXIX.

O! 'tis the melting tenderness of Heaven,
Dissolving, o'er the tomb where silent lies
The Son of God, to man in mercy given
To cheer him, with a hope that never dies!
Angels, indeed, are strangers to those cries
Extorted by the sense of keen distress;
Yet, not devoid of kindest sympathies;
The woes of virtue on their bosoms press,
Awaking strong desire gently to soothe and bless.

XXX.

Hence, oft on mercy's errands, full of love
And tender pity for the sufferer's lot,
They leave their radiant home in climes above,
And on their glittering pinions, swift as thought,
As if the songs of Heaven were all forgot,
Visit the saint while on his dying bed,
In poverty perhaps, but dearly bought
By precious blood, to save him freely shed:
They love to cheer his heart, and ease his aching head.

XXXI.

While sympathizing friends, with weeping eyes,
Stand round his couch, and strive to soothe his pains,
And hush his fears, and catch his latest sighs,
These ministers of love from ether plains
Breathe softly on his ear those rapturous strains
Which none but dying saints on earth can hear;
And when, at last, stern death his triumph gains,
They bear him to their own eternal sphere,
Where neither sickness, pain, anguish, or death appear.

XXXII.

Now, sadder thoughts their gentle minds employ
Than those suggested by the dying bed
Of suffering saints. They think not of the joy,
The rapture, on the scenes around them spread ;
They think of Him who, in our nature, bled
And died, in anguish, on the accursed tree ;
Who now lies cold and silent with the dead.
On all the objects which their eyes can see,
Rests a bedimmed shade of deep solemnity.

XXXIII.

Low, plaintive tones are heard on every side.
The leaves that tremble in Life's verdant bowers
Shed mournful melodies. The sparkling tide,
Whose banks are fringed with never-fading flowers,
Ripples in sadness. The refreshing showers
From founts perennial seem to fall in tears.
The bell that peals those swift and joyous hours,
Which, to the blest, measure their endless years,
More solemn, melting, soft, in all its tones appears.

XXXIV.

No longer, from ten thousand tongues, resound
The notes of gratulation, pealing high,
Pouring, on all the glorious scenes around,
The swelling waves of joyous melody,
Whose pauses tones from golden harps supply.
In mournful groups are seen the Sons of Light ;
Some to the distant bowers and grottos fly,
As dreading the approach of deeper night,
And seeking safe retreat till Heaven once more is bright !

XXXV.

Others, sedate, on lofty crystal towers
Sit and converse in whispers ; giving sign,
By countenance and gesture, that their powers
Of feeling, thought, emotion, all combine
On one sad topic ; others, still, incline
To wander on the banks of Life's glad stream,
Mirrored by whose clear waves resplendent shine
Their own fair forms. Wrapt in deep thought they seem,
As pondering the event of some dark, mournful dream.

XXXVI.

Some on the willow trees, that bend and shade
The stream that rolls through Heaven its waters bright,
Suspend those harps, for other purpose made ;
As if their tones could waken no delight,
While yet Messiah's form lies wrapped in night ;
Others, in accents plaintive, soft and low,
Chant solemn hymns, whose melodies unite
So much of tenderness and melting woe,
As to cause pity's drops from angels' eyes to flow.

XXXVII.

The radiant glory on the sacred hill
Is compassed by a cloud condensed and high,
Whose shades, on every side extended, fill
The smiling landscape of eternity,
And seem to threaten nameless peril nigh.
Immortal spirits, veiled in partial night,
In silence mourn, or breathe a plaintive sigh,
That once again, robed in celestial light,
Heaven's glorious scenes of bliss may beam upon their sight.

XXXVIII.

While thus, o'er all the pure ethereal plains,
Where white-robed saints and hymning angels dwell,
Solemnity, deep, universal, reigns ;
Such as no thought can grasp, or language tell,
Wrapping celestial bosoms in its spell ;
A voice is heard, from God's eternal throne,
Whose accents loud through Heaven's vast concave swell,
Making to all its glittering legions known
The will of Him, who calls the universe His own.

XXXIX.

It summons all the radiant Sons of Light
Quick to assemble round the Sacred Hill.
Instant they hear, and spread their pinions bright,
And haste their Sovereign's mandate to fulfill ;
To meet His smile, their hearts with rapture thrill ;
Like golden clouds robed in the blaze of day,
Whose brilliant tints defy the painter's skill,
Careering through the heavens, they make their way
Swift as the lightning's flash, or vivid solar ray.

XL.

And now, more numerous than the clustering leaves
O'er hills and vales in the vast forest strewn,
When Autumn on the face of Nature heaves
In wrath her faded robe, around the Throne
From which the glory of the Unseen is shown,
Millions of radiant forms with reverence stand ;
Shaded, yet with a brightness all their own,
And shedding rays of light on every hand,
They wait to hear announced Jehovah's high command.

XLI.

Sweet, yet majestic, is the voice they hear ;
More welcome than the melodies that roll
Eternal and sublime in that bright sphere
Where hymning worlds resound, from pole to pole,
Transporting strains that seize and charm the soul.
'Tis that paternal voice oft heard above,
Which o'er their willing hearts has full control.
Well pleased, they listen, prompted by that love
Which seeks, with warm desire, its loyalty to prove :

XLII.

Spirits of Light, assembled at the call
Of Him whose pleasure ye of choice fulfill,
On numberless occasions have ye all
Witnessed, with glowing hearts, my power and skill ;
For often, in obedience to my will,
Leaving the glories of the upper skies
In search of wonders new and newer still,
Have ye beheld new worlds in beauty rise,
Revealing rapturous scenes to your admiring eyes.

XLIII.

When earth was first created by my power,
On wings expanded ye were hovering nigh,
Curious spectators of its natal hour.
Piercing eternal night with angel-eye,
Rolled from my forming hand ye saw it fly
Onward, in its vast orb, like thing of life ;
Dark and chaotic, without sea or sky,
Or solid land ; its elements in strife
Commingled, shapeless, wild, with all confusion rife.

XLIV.

When, by a single word, 'twas robed in light,
And instantly revealed to every eye,
In clearer view, relieved from shades of night;
And when 'twas compassed by the azure sky,
Then ye, in admiration, hovered nigh.
Ye saw, collected in the mighty deep
The waters, and the land upheaved and dry;
Ye saw the billows roll and dash and leap,
Yet held, by my command, within their barriers keep.

XLV.

Ye saw its beauteous continents and isles,
With a bright robe of living verdure spread,
Like youthful bride adorned to meet the smiles
Of waiting spouse, when to the Altar led;
The wildering scenes of chaos now were fled,
Herbs flourished, waved in air fruit-burdened trees;
The primrose pale, the rose with blushing red,
And flowers of every hue, shed on the breeze
All charming odours which the ravished senses please.

XLVI.

Ye saw the sun burst forth in glory bright,
Hung like a lamp in Heaven, dispensing day;
And the pale moon appear, with silver light,
To spread o'er night a softer, milder ray,
And soothe repose; while all in slumber lay
The weary head, and rest from toils and fears,
In sweet oblivion dreaming them away.
These glorious orbs were placed amid the spheres
To measure out to man times, seasons, months and years.

XLVII.

Ye saw, bright beaming in the azure skies,
Kindled the stars, which from the earth appear
Like glittering gems, or your own radiant eyes ;
But when beheld from some position near,
Are seen to fill a grand and glorious sphere,
Replete with beauty, verdure, life and joy ;
Fair, blooming worlds, running their bright career
Of virtue, wisdom, bliss without alloy,
Unvisited by fiends, whose pride is to destroy.

XLVIII.

Ye saw the waters sudden teem with life,
From fish, reposing in its pearly shell,
To huge leviathan, that dares the strife
Of angry billows, when they toss and swell.
All moving things that in the ocean dwell,
And in the seas and lakes and streams, ye saw
When bursting into life. Nor can ye tell
Their various tribes, nor understand the law
By which I, from the depths, these stores of life did draw.

XLIX.

From the same source the insect forms arose,
Disporting in the heavens on puny wing ;
And birds, the colour of whose plumes disclose
Unnumbered beauties, and whose warblings fling
Sweet music 'mong the groves arrayed in spring ;
Ye saw them revel in their native air,
And offer to Creation's glorious King
Their rapturous songs, which may with yours compare—
Songs prompted by gay hearts estranged from every care.

L.

Then, sprang from earth a thousand varied forms
Of moving life, to fill its wide domains :
Beasts tame and savage, reptiles, insect swarms,
To haunt its mountains, forests, hills and plains,
In search of food which life and strength maintains ;
And last of all, with empire o'er the rest,
And formed to offer praise in nobler strains,
Man rose from dust, with living spirit blest,
Exempt from every ill while heeding my behest.

LI.

Each separate process of the work was good,
And very good appeared the whole combined ;
Perfect in beauty, excellence, it stood,
As always pictured in my changeless mind ;
Omniscience with its plan no fault could find.
Ye hung, enamoured, o'er a world so fair,
To hail its new-born excellence inclined,
As if committed to your special care :
Your shouts and songs of triumph filled its ambient air.

LII.

A new Creation, fairer, brighter far,
Now hastens to its consummation. Well ye know
That Satan, who delights my works to mar,
And spread his empire dark of sin and woe,
Resolved the bliss of man to overthrow.
In serpent form he tempted him to stray,
And break my plain command, designed to show
And test his disposition to obey.
He fell, and from his heart holiness fled away.

LIII.

That image fair, in which he had been made,
Perennial source of pure and sweet delight,
He lost entirely, and became arrayed
In selfishness and hatred to the right;
Guilty and lost, he strove to shun my sight;
Himself and all his race, for bliss designed,
He madly plunged in sin and endless night!
How foolish and ungrateful! how unkind!
What a return to Him who formed his deathless mind!

LIV.

The law which he had broken, holy, just,
Benignant in its influence, wisely framed
To impose restraint upon each hurtful lust,
And foster every good that can be named,
Its penalty of death eternal claimed.
An endless storm was gathering over man,
Which at his bosom all its thunders aimed;
No mind created could devise a plan
With the bright bow of peace his darkening sky to span.

LV.

But wisdom infinite, and love supreme,
And tender mercy, moved to meet the case,
And find a remedy. They formed a scheme
Which justice sanctioned, and which proffered grace
To him who thus had forfeited his place
In Heaven's esteem, and lay involved in woe.
My only Son Beloved, in whose face
My Image perfect shines, as well ye know,
Consented for a time that glory to forego,

LVI.

Which, from eternity, He had with me,
And meekly veil Himself in human clay,
And virtually endure the penalty
Of violated law, and bear away
The curse which on the doomed offender lay.
Hence, in a manger, lowly and obscure,
He had His birth, (ye sang His natal day,)
And hence, His glorious object to secure,
Did every form of shame and suffering endure.

LVII.

Why did the nations in their blindness rage ?
The people strive to compass what was vain ?
Rulers and kings were sottish to engage
In rash attempt to obstruct Messiah's reign,
And with their feeble hands sever the chain
By which He drags in triumph all His foes ;
In spite of all their efforts, He'll maintain
His throne of regal power ; while all of those
Who will not bow the knee, shall sink to endless woes.

LVIII.

Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Jews
And Roman soldiers, wickedly combined
His goodness and compassion to abuse ;
Yet, did what my own counsel had designed,
Their hearts by hate, and mine by love inclined ;
Their motives evil, mine supremely good.
They crucified, and in the tomb confined
Their own Messiah ; yet His precious blood
Atoned for sinful men, and opened mercy's flood.

LIX.

Now they exult, and think their cause is gained ;
Vainly imagining that He who lies
The victim of their scorn, by death enchained,
Will never from His cold, dark mansion rise ;
But consternation dire, and sad surprise
Await the men who nailed Him to the tree ;
When the first ray salutes Judea's skies,
The illustrious prisoner, from the grave set free,
O'er conquered Death shall reign. All shall His glory see.

LX.

Now comes the morning of a brighter day
Than that which robed the new-born world in light ;
A morning which shall dart its cheering ray
Into the gloomy depths of moral night,
And clothe the tomb itself in beauty bright.
A new creation hastens to its close,
More glorious far than that which met your sight
When Earth, by my command, from nothing rose ;
Though, to announce its birth, your sweetest hymns ye chose.

LXI.

No costly sacrifice did that demand,
No anxious cares and toils and bitter pains.
Its swelling oceans and its mountains grand,
Its towering hills and wide extended plains,
Its air, its floating clouds, its dews and rains,
Its sun and moon, which measure out its years,
Its swarms of life, and all that life maintains,
Cost neither shame, nor agony, nor tears ;
While, at the expense of blood, this world of grace appears.

LXII.

That world which once was glorious and fair,
The abode of holiness and ceaseless joy,
Is wretched now. The Spoiler has been there,
Bent all its peace and beauty to destroy.
A thousand varied forms of ill annoy
Its happiest sons and daughters. Eden's bowers
Are withered quite. No bliss without alloy
Gilds with serenity its fleeting hours :
Darkened are all its scenes, and blighted all its flowers.

LXIII.

Ruin awaits it. At the destined hour
Its fairest objects all shall melt away,
Amid the flames commissioned to devour.
Piles, which for ages had defied decay,
The abodes of wealth and rank and vain display,
Shall sink to dust, and never more be found.
When once arrives the Heaven-appointed day,
Earth's glories shall be leveled to the ground,
And all its empires wrapt in solitude profound.

LXIV.

Not so with the New World which grace has made,
Of which Messiah is the anointed King.
Firm, on eternal adamant, are laid
Its broad foundations. Ages shall but bring
Accessions to its strength, and only fling
New glories o'er its fair and wide domain ;
Creation vast shall with its honours ring.
When the Messiah sunders Death's strong chain,
O'er the whole Universe triumphant shall He reign.

LXV.

The Earth is His, by blood most freely shed ;
All worlds are His, by His own native right ;
Let saints and angels own Him as their Head,
And hail Him King, with transports of delight ;
Ascribing to their Sovereign wisdom, might,
Dominion, righteousness, salvation, love,
Majesty, goodness, mercy infinite !
Let all to Him their willing homage prove,
And to fulfil His will in swift obedience move !

LXVI.

To thwart His power and wisdom, truth and grace,
His glorious reign shall no obstruction meet ;
All foes, by love subdued, shall seek His face,
Or writhe in consternation at His feet.
His peaceful conquests He shall still repeat,
Till the whole earth shall bow beneath His sway
In willing homage and in rapture sweet.
Remotest tribes His sceptre shall obey,
And from earth's guilty shores the curse shall pass away.

LXVII.

Go, then, celestial spirits ; wing your flight
Swift as the morning's ray to Joseph's grave ;
There witness, with exulting hearts, the might
Of Him, whose arm can conquer and can save ;
See Him o'er Death His glorious banner wave,
And life immortal plainly bring to light,
And pour contempt on those who madly brave
His righteous claims, and treat Him with despise.
See Him shed Hope's bright ray on all the realms of night !

LXVIII.

The Jewish rulers, who have shed His blood,
Still brand with infamy His honoured name ;
Raging against Him like the swelling flood,
Endeavouring His goodness to defame ;
Go see a deed which puts them all to shame,
And makes their guilt stand out in crimson dye.
Their pride and hate have caused my wrath to flame ;
Soon shall they seek to hide from every eye,
And look, and long, in vain, to find some refuge nigh !

LXIX.

The infernal powers exult, and madly proud
Of their success, indulge the foolish dream
Of universal conquest. Boasting loud
Of their exploits, like an impetuous stream
They rush from that abyss, where not a gleam
Of hope is shed to scatter night away,
And, roaming o'er the earth innumerable, seem
To feel that all are underneath their sway.
Go, see that deed which drives their impious dream away.

LXX.

The little flock, who heard the Saviour's voice,
And shared His love, and followed where He led,
While all His persecutors now rejoice
Because their Master makes the grave His bed—
This little flock now weep, and bow the head,
And, left alone, seem sinking in despair.
None but the Shepherd peace and joy can shed
On their dark path, and banish every care.
Go, see Him, from the tomb, swift to their help repair !

LXXI.

Ye white-robed saints, mingling with angels here,
And emulous to equal them in zeal,
Go, see your Saviour, from the tomb, appear
Triumphant o'er His foes. In homage kneel,
And cast your crowns before Him. Know and feel
That by His blood you gained this blissful clime ;
All ancient rites His coming did reveal,
To cancel guilt. Before the birth of time
He purposed His own death, to save your souls from crime !

LXXII.

Your joys transporting, through long ages fled,
Amid the purity and bliss of Heaven,
Have flowed from Him as from their fountain head ;
All through His mediation have been given :
'Twas by His hand your chains of sin were riven ;
'Twas by His blood your guilt was washed away.
In vain against temptation had ye striven,
Had He not deigned His goodness to display,
And strengthened you with might hither to make your way.

LXXIII.

Your spotless purity, your ardent love,
Your glowing zeal, your robes of beauty bright,
Your palms, your sceptres, crowns—all only prove
How much you owe to Him, whose love and might
From rebels vile have made you saints in light.
Go, then, and look with reverence on His grave ;
And when, from its dark shades, He meets your sight,
Fall down before Him ; sing His power to save,
And, with His presence blest, your palms of triumph wave.

LXXIV.

Go, saints and angels, glowing with desires
Worthy the great occasion. Quick expand
Your rapid wings. Let Gabriel lead the choirs
Of Angels, Cherubs, Seraphs, and the band
Of white-robed saints be led by Moses' hand !
When your swift journey finds its destined end,
Nearest let Moses and Elias stand ;
Next, all the saints, to greet the sinner's Friend ;
Angels may not with them for precedence contend !

LXXV.

When the sky gleams with morning's earliest ray,
Know that the moment long desired is near ;
Then, let the angel Gabriel roll away
The ponderous stone ; the guards will quail with fear,
And fall as dead ; and Jesus will appear,
Robed with a lustre brighter than the sun,
No more to feel the scourge, the cross, the spear ;
But, seated on His Mediatorial Throne,
To wear that peerless crown by bitter sorrows won !

LXXVI.

Then, hail the Conqueror of Death and Hell
With all your tongues, and all your harps of gold ;
Let happy myriads the grand chorus swell,
And wide, through earth and Heaven, the song be rolled ;
Let music all its sweetest charms unfold
To greet the ear of Him, who, once assailed
By mockery and scorn and woes untold,
Was not discouraged in His work, nor failed,
But firm endured, till all the powers of darkness quailed.

LXXVII.

Before His feet let all your honours lie,
Your palms, your crowns, and own Him Lord of all;
Then through the Universe with rapture fly,
In separate bands, and visit every ball
That floats in space, be it or great or small;
And sing, from every azure canopy,
The name of Him who rescued, from the fall,
Rebellious man. Proclaim, from every sky,
That o'er the Universe He reigns, in glory high!

LXXVIII.

Thus spake the Eternal Father. Instant fled
The cloud that stood condensed around the throne,
While beautiful and glorious, in its stead,
The Bow of Peace and Mercy radiant shone.
The hosts of Heaven the cheering signal own,
And fill the concave vast with notes of praise.
The shade that dimmed their shining forms is gone;
They stand revealed, in that effulgent blaze
Which, on the Sacred Hill, glory divine displays.

LXXIX.

Forthwith, spontaneous, at the trumpet's call
They form, in order, for the intended flight.
One aim, one spirit moves, inspires them all;
One source exhaustless fills them with delight,
The smile of Him whose laws are pure and right;
Their bliss is but to know and do His will,
And stand for ever blameless in His sight.
Hence, instantly they leave the Sacred Hill,
And Heaven, in their flight, with songs of triumph fill.

LXXX.

Worthy art Thou, Almighty!—thus they sing—
Worthy all honour, reverence, love, and praise ;
Thou art our Maker, Benefactor, King ;
Holy, yet clothed with mercy's beaming rays.
What mind created comprehends thy ways !
Thy judgments are a vast and boundless deep,
On which with awe mingled with love, we gaze ;
Thy hand is never weary, never sleep
Thine eyes that watch o'er all, and all in safety keep.

LXXXI.

Might, majesty, dominion, are Thy due ;
Greatness and glory, without bound or end.
Reign Thou for ever, holy, just and true ;
Reign o'er our hearts, and constant influence send,
To cause our minds beneath Thy sway to bend !
Thy grace preserved us safe, when others fell ;
Thou wast our mighty and unchanging Friend,
When spirits pure and deathless durst rebel,
And, for their causeless crime, were doomed to dreadful Hell.

LXXXII.

O Life eternal, underived, sublime ;
Light, Beauty, Strength, Love, Excellence Supreme !
Thy smile alone sheds lustre on the clime
In which we dwell ! Thou art the exhaustless theme
Of all our tongues and harps ; the unfailing stream
Of all our bliss ; the Sun, whose rays benign
On the wide universe resplendent beam !
On our immortal pathway deign to shine,
And fill our hearts with love, transporting and divine !

LXXXIII.

We go to see Thy glory, as revealed
In thy beloved Son, now with the dead ;
Glory transcendent, shrouded and concealed,
But soon to shine in all its strength, and shed
Immortal honour on Messiah's head.
We go to see Him triumph o'er the grave,
And Death itself, by Him a captive led ;
To crown Him King, and palms of victory wave,
In honour of the Prince who shed His blood to save !

LXXXIV.

Thus sing this mighty chorus, with their strains
Filling the eternal regions ; sending tones
Unearthly, sweet, transporting, o'er the plains
Where Love and Joy have fixed their changeless thrones ;
And even in that world which both disowns,
Mingling soft cadence with its horrors fell ;
Yet not suspending its undying groans,
But causing them in sadder notes to swell.
What fills all Heaven with joy, wakes deeper grief in Hell.

LXXXV.

Swift, through the Gates of Pearl, they speed their flight,
Nor meet obstruction ; for these portals fair—
As if they listened with intense delight,
And with the music sweet that fills the air
Would blend their own, awaiting not the care
Of other agency—spontaneous move,
While hitherward the glittering hosts repair.
Thus giving egress from the realms above
To those on errand bound, assigned to them by Love.

LXXXVI.

Onward they move harmonious; in array
More gorgeous far than that which down the stream
Of crystal Cydnus floated, when the gay
And beauteous Cleopatra, 'mid the gleam
Of gold and purple, was the enchanting theme
Of every tongue, the admired of every eye,
And startled, from ambition's wildering dream,
The haughty soul of Roman Antony.
How soon that pomp expired! Heaven's glories never die!

LXXXVII.

They need no Telescope to aid their sight,
And full display, before their piercing eyes,
Scattered through space, ten thousand worlds of light
To cheer them forward in their grand emprise.
New and more glorious scenes around them rise,
As, with swift progress, they pursue their way,
Whither the object of their errand lies.
No fears alarm them, lest they go astray;
God's hand incessant guides, His smile gives perfect day!

LXXXVIII.

On every beaming world that, floating near,
Unfolds the wonders of their Maker's hand,
They smile in love, and fill its atmosphere
With notes, now soft and sweet, now full and grand;
And fain amid its beauteous scenes would stand,
And roam its fields, and climb its sapphire hills,
And cull its flowers, and breathe its zephyrs bland,
And in its fountains bathe, and quaff its rills;
But holier charm than these their raptured bosom thrills!

LXXXIX.

Hence, they delay not other worlds to scan,
However bright or beautiful ; but fly,
Swift as the light, to find the abode of man,
For whom, when lost, the Son of God did die,
Whose lifeless form now in the tomb doth lie.
The Earth, at length, appears involved in night
And gloom funereal. Instant, from its sky,
The clouds which hung condensed are put to flight.
It gleams in beauty mild beneath the pale moon's light.

XC.

The Infernal Spirits, bent on deeds of night—
Anxious, by stealthy movements, to betray,
And darkness choosing, rather than the light—
When the dense cloud so sudden rolled away
Were filled with anger, sorrow and dismay ;
Yet deeper anguish seized them, when, on high,
They saw Heaven's armies ranged in bright array,
With glittering pinions gleaming on the sky,
And, with resistless progress, swiftly drawing nigh ;

XCI.

Then waked anew those passions, restless, fierce.
And uncontrolled, which feed and fan the fire
That burns for ever, and with daggers pierce
The guilty spirit, longing to expire ;—
Ambition, envy, malice, quenchless ire,
Shame, horror, keen remorse and vengeful pride ;
Passions which foster the intense desire
Of bliss, that never can be gratified,
And wake a dreadful Hell, wherever they abide !

XCII.

Their empty dreams of conquest quickly fled,
Like morning's mist before the sun's bright ray ;
The purity, the love, the beauty shed
By angel forms, served only to display—
As night seems darker when compared with day—
Their utter guilt and ruin, and recall
The bliss that they had madly thrown away.
With horror they remembered now their fall,
Which banished them from Heaven, and stripped them of
their all.

XCIII.

No shout of proud defiance did they raise,
No wish betray to meet their foes in fight ;
For conscious guilt its courage most displays
When danger is not nigh, but out of sight ;
Abashed, dejected, shorn of all their might,
Baffled in all their schemes, with sore dismay
They sought their safety by a speedy flight ;
Glad in their own dark home to make their stay,
Though, on its dread abodes, hope sheds no gleam of day.

XCIV.

Meantime, more numerous than the pearly grains
Which lie embanked on ocean's winding strand,
The bands celestial, hymning still sweet strains,
Pour like a silver torrent o'er the land ;
On field and mountain, hill and tower, they stand.
On Salem's lofty battlements they rest ;
On all its palaces, its temple grand,
On Zion's top, on Olive's verdant crest,
On all the heights around repose these spirits blest.

XCV.

Not visible, indeed, to mortal sight,
But like those angels that, in bright array,
Guarded Elisha, who had passed the night
In Dothan, and, though sought at dawn of day,
By Syrian hosts that all around him lay,
Was safe, because more numerous hosts were near.
His servant feared, and he was led to pray:
Lord, open Thou his eyes. Instant appear
Chariot and horse of fire, broad shield and glittering spear.

XCVI.

Thus beamed, in glorious beauty, round the tomb
Of Him who bore our sorrows, angels bright
And radiant saints ; shedding, amid the gloom
Of earth's decaying scenes, celestial light ;
And, like the watchful guards that, through the night,
Long for the coming of the morning ray,
Waited the moment when the Saviour's might
The iron bars of death should tear away,
And open wide the gate of IMMORTALITY.



CANTO V.

THE VICTORY OVER DEATH.




CANTO V.

THE VICTORY OVER DEATH.

ANALYSIS.

Apostrophe to Victory.—Moonlight scenery.—Sanhedrim dispersed.—Disciples in quiet sleep.—Celestial visitants awaiting the moment of the Resurrection.—Roman guard watching.—Power and grandeur of Rome.—Extent of her conquests, embracing Carthage, Sicily, &c.—Four great empires represented by Nebuchadnezzar's image.—Rome the only one of these surviving.—Apostrophe to Rome.—Her future ruin.—Apostrophe to the morning just at hand.—The Earthquake.—The removal of the stone from the mouth of the Sepulchre.—Terror and syncope of the Roman Guards.—Resurrection of the Saviour.—Triumphant hymn of the Heavenly Hosts.—Their flight to other worlds to publish the news.—Recovery and dispersion of the guards.



VICTORY.

O FONDLY worshipped power, I woo thy smile ;
Nor I alone ; all for thy presence sigh ;
The rich, the poor, the lofty and the vile,
With equal zeal to win thy friendship try,
And long to see thy cheering presence nigh.
But O ! how widely different their desires !
As different as the gifts thy hands supply !
Some importune thee to awake those fires,
By whose consuming power a nation's hope expires.

The hero, burning with the love of fame,
Not of immortal growth, but doomed to die,
Awaked to rapture by thy very name,

Asks thee to lead him o'er the field, where lie
The accumulated heaps of wrecked humanity,—
Neighbours, sons, brothers, fathers, lately blest
With life, and home, and friends, and pulses high,
Now cold and pale, in robes of crimson drest,
Crimson, whose gushing fount was their own panting breast ;

The field, where not the dead alone are seen ;
Oceans of tears for them were all in vain !
No voice of friendship, look of love serene,
Or tears of pity can awake again
The clay-cold forms in ruthless battle slain ;
The suffering are there, who seek repose
From burning thirst and agonizing pain ;
No mother, sister near, to soothe their woes,
Receive their sad farewell, and then their eyelids close.

The candidate for popular applause—
More anxious to obtain his country's smile,
And get her treasure, than maintain her laws,
And save her from the intrigues of the vile—
Aping the guileless patriot's tone and style,
Implores thee to conduct him to the seat
Of power and affluence ; there to share a while
The glittering spoils of office, and repeat
His love for those who lay their honours at his feet.

The devotees of fashion and display,
Anxious to shine, in wealth and pomp and dress ;
The learned, the grave, the witty and the gay,
And e'en the sons of penury and distress,
Invoke thy power to pity and to bless.
They have their rivals who their envy raise,
And all those rivals gladly would depress.
Each in his sphere is lavish of thy praise,
And seeks to wreath around his brow thy withering bays.

But thou hast fairer, lovelier wreaths to give,
Than those which wake and flatter human pride ;
Unfading wreaths, in verdure bright to live,
When in its bosom the dark grave shall hide
All that for which ambition ever sighed.
On all who o'er themselves a conquest gain,
By following Him who suffered, bled and died,
Thou wilt bestow a wreath without a stain ;
The privilege with Him to rise, and live, and reign.

Shower, then, thy wreaths, by tears of widows stained,
Or by the sighs of orphans rendered sere ;
Those that the breath of avarice has profaned,
Those, crowned with which proud science would appear,
As well as those to power or pleasure dear ;
For they are fading as the ethereal bow ;
Shower them on those whose wishes linger here,
And cling to hopes which death will overthrow :
On me a boon more pure and permanent bestow.



I.

Salem is wrapped in soft, sweet slumber now,
Beneath the silver robe the moon has thrown
O'er palace, temple, tower, and mountain brow.
The cloud that once her beauties dimmed is flown,
And, save the prisoner's sigh, the feeble moan
Of infancy demanding mother's care,
Or from the sick man's couch, the plaintive groan,
No sound of woe is stealing through the air.
Well pleased, the smiling stars look down on scene so fair.

II.

Nature, in quiet beauty, seems to wait,
Listening in expectation of the hour
When Jesus, passing through the iron gate
Of death, subdued by His inherent power,
Shall be proclaimed the never-failing Tower
Of those whom sin and guilt had doomed to pain,
And the dark grave had threatened to devour.
Hence, over mountain, valley, hill and plain,
Serenity and peace and gentle stillness reign.

III.

The Sanhedrim have left the Council Hall,
Rejoiced to find the ominous darkness fled
That in deep horrors had enshrouded all,
And threatened vengeance on their guilty head ;
They hope that He, who slumbers with the dead,
Will never rise to vindicate His cause.
By envious bigotry and pride misled,
In guilt's career they still disdain to pause,
But spurn Jehovah's will, and trample on His laws.

IV.

Alas ! how short the triumph guilt displays !
Like meteor streaming through the midnight air,
And glittering with a momentary blaze,
'Tis but the transient prelude to despair !
They fondly think their prospects now are fair,
But all their schemes to compass wealth and power,
Involving so much labour, thought and care,
Like a fleet dream shall vanish in an hour.
The light of hope shall flee, the night of sorrow lower.

V.

The helpless flock, whose Shepherd has been slain,
And who, to soothe each other's cares and woes,
Had, at their meeting, laboured long and vain,
Are slumbering now, forgotten all their foes,
And tasting sweeter rest than envy knows.
Sleep, sorrowing ones ! Forget your griefs and tears,
For much your aching bosoms need repose.
Yet sleep not long. That morning soon appears
Which wakes anew your hopes, and scatters all your fears.

VI.

But there are other eyes that find no sleep—
Millions of radiant eyes that fix their sight
On Joseph's tomb, and constant vigils keep—
Waiting the moment when the morn's first light
Shall, to their view, display Messiah's might.
Hail, spirits blest ! Ye shall not wait in vain !
Soon shall that sun arise, whose radiance bright
Shall pierce the abodes of sin, and guilt, and pain,
And shine o'er all the earth, never to set again !

VII.

Nor sleep the Roman Guards ; taught to obey
The will of their superiors, and fulfill
The task assigned, whate'er obstruct their way ;
In rules of right possessing little skill,
Yet knowing well to battle and to kill ;
In siege, in sortie, or in deadly field,
Careless their own or others' blood to spill ;
Constant they watch, convinced that, if they yield
To sleep, and lose their ward, nothing their life can shield.

VIII.

They pant for glory, such as is displayed
By hero coming from successful war ;
In martial pomp and waving plume arrayed,
Illustrious captives dragging at his car,
And showing heaps of gold that gleam afar,
And treasures torn from cities doomed to fire ;
Nor think of woes that all this glory mar,
The hopes, the joys, that in its gleam expire.
Its horrors they forget, its meteor flash admire !

IX.

But glory, such as fires the soldier's thought,
And lends a transient lustre to his name,
Much better in some other field were sought ;
For nothing but defeat, disaster, shame,
Await the men who madly seek for fame
By vain attempts to guard Messiah's grave.
Victories and conquests numberless proclaim
The Roman Legions bravest of the brave ;
Yet all their might would fail Messiah to enslave.

X.

Rome holds a powerful and extensive sway,
Embracing all the nations known to fame ;
Revolving centuries have passed away
Since all the Italians 'neath her sceptre came ;
Remotest regions tremble at her name.
Carthage, whose ships once traversed every sea,
And whose commercial greatness seemed to claim
The homage of the world, has ceased to be,
Or lives but an obscure and injured colony.

XI.

Long struggled she for empire, long maintained
Successful conflict with her haughty foe,
And, grappling fiercely, many a victory gained.
Crossing the Alps, wrapped in eternal snow,
Hannibal swept the verdant plains below ;
At Ticinum, Trebia, Thrasymene's wave,
And Cannæ, Roman blood he caused to flow ;
But all his skill and prowess could not save
The Carthaginian State, now sinking to her grave !

XII.

Opposed by faction, suddenly recalled
To meet invasion on his native shore,
The conquering Hannibal, with grief appalled,
Ceased o'er the Italian plains his troops to pour.
Proud Rome he left, and never saw her more !
On Zama's field he met his country's foes,
And greater bravery never showed before ;
But Scipio triumphed at the battle's close—
The star of Carthage set, nor ever after rose.

XIII.

Sicilia, called the granary of Rome,
Obeys her sceptre. Native tribes are there.
Greeks, Tyrians, Carthaginians found a home,
Built towns, and planted colonies with care
Upon her shores. Thither did oft repair
Vast fleets and armies, sent from foreign strand
In search of conquest. 'Mong its cities fair
Was Syracuse, the glory of the land,
'Mid scenes of wealth and power, gleaming on every hand.

XIV.

Here Gelon and Timoleon gained a name,
Hiero lived, and Dionysius reigned,
And Archimedes dwelt, well known to fame.
Many and great the triumphs that she gained
O'er foreign foes. She long her power maintained.
Athens, the mistress of the Ægean waves,
Met ruin here, and wept with grief unfeigned;
Here oft the Carthaginians found their graves,
But from Rome's deadly grasp no skill or valour saves.

XV.

Marcellus, called the sword of Rome, assailed
Her lofty walls and towers, and laid them low.
Even the skill of Archimedes failed,
Though oft it baffled and repelled the foe,
To avert from Syracuse the fatal blow.
In vain she struggled to protract the time,
And vainly did her sons with ardour glow
To save their city and their lovely clime.
Syracuse now decays, like stranded wreck sublime.

XVI.

Fair Macedonia's realm, for valour known,
Whence Alexander issued to extend
His empire, and subvert Darius' throne,
The cause of Greece pretending to defend—
As if Ambition could be Freedom's friend—
Fair Macedonia, whose potent sway
Made nations bow, beheld her empire end
On Pydna's field. The Romans gained the day,
And the dread Phalanx saw its glory pass away.

XVII.

Illyricum, whose monarch, bribed by gold,
Had favoured Perseus, and with treatment rude
Confined the Roman envoys in his hold—
Illyricum, thus found in bitter feud
With nation not with love of right imbued,
Struggled in vain with her superior foe.
Anicius Gallus soon her power subdued ;
Gentius, her king, fell at a single blow,
And graced the Prætor's triumph, sunk in hopeless woe.

XVIII.

Greece, famed for arts and arms in every age,
Diffusing light to all the nations round ;
Leaving recorded on the historic page
A thousand monuments of skill profound
And taste unrivalled ; known as classic ground,
The home of poets, painters, sculptors ; where
The voice of eloquence did oft resound,
And music, taught by freedom, filled the air,
And lofty Plato held the philosophic chair ;—

XIX.

Greece, with her cities, villas, temples grand,
Her olive groves, fair gardens, verdant fields,
Trembled and sighed, through all her classic land,
When gleamed in view the Roman spears and shields,
Summoned to conquest by the trumpet's peals.
Ambition triumphed. Freedom met her fall.
Corinth, by her sad ruins, now reveals
The infamy of Mummius, at whose call
Were wrapt in flames her art, her wealth and grandeur all.

XX.

Hispania, long a field of mutual strife
Between the Punic and the Roman arms,
Ravaged by each in turn, and always rife
With factions, insurrections and alarms ;
Reft of her freedom, rifled of her charms,
Saw o'er her fields at last Rome's banner wave.
Numantia now no fell destroyer harms ;
She, rather than submit to be a slave,
In flames, with all her children, found a common grave !

XXI.

Syria, whose splendid capital is placed
On fair Orontes' stream, and rightly named
The queen of all the eastern cities ; graced
With wealth and beauty, founded by the famed
Seleucus ; Syria, also, has been tamed
By Roman might. Antiochus, the Great,
For good advice rejected justly blamed,
Lost, on Magnesia's field, his high estate ;
A Roman province, hence, became his country's fate.

XXII.

And now, in Daphne's cool and green retreat,
Compassed by groves of Cypress and of Bay—
Where all the charms of taste and luxury meet,
Soft zephyrs fan and sparkling fountains play—
Whither resort the beautiful, the gay,
And those whom wealth and high distinction greet
With special favour—Prætors, Consuls stray,
Drink pleasure's draught, and oft that draught repeat,
While troops of Syrian slaves are crouching at their feet.

XXIII.

Numidia, whose tribes were unrestrained,
And, like her lions, fiercely roamed for prey—
Where Syphax, Masinissa, Juba reigned,
And, by their acts severe, and rude display,
Essayed to make these restless tribes obey—
Trembled, amid her rocks and arid plains,
To find the Roman legions make their way
To her most secret haunts, inflicting pains
On her wild, fearless sons, unused to servile chains.

XXIV.

Jugurtha, cruel, artful, active, brave,
And taught by Scipio to wield the sword,
Long fearlessly withstood the angry wave
That o'er his wide and bleak dominions poured,
Nor startled when the billows round him roared.
He rendered Aulus and his army slaves ;
Caused them to pass beneath the yoke abhorred !—
His realm for many thousands furnished graves ;
But Sylla caught, at last, this cruel Prince of knaves.

XXV.

The Lesser Asia, populous and wide,
With all her nations, owns the Roman sway.
There, Mithridates struggled with the tide
Of war, that swept, at length, his throne away.
Oft, in the bitter strife, he gained the day ;
Aquilius and Muræna felt his might,
While, scattered o'er the field, around them lay
Their legions, slaughtered in the dreadful fight.
They gladly, from his arm, their safety sought by flight.

XXVI.

Except the Carthaginian, whose arms
Thundered in triumph round her very walls,
Rome found no foe that caused her such alarms
As Pontus' king. Courage, that nought appals,
And skill and prudence to repair his falls
And dire misfortunes; these proclaimed him Great,
And with the sons of fame his name instals;
Yet Sylla and Lucullus sealed his fate,
And Pompey made him poor, and stripped him of his state.

XXVII.

Gallia, from which the conquering Brennus came,
And with his forces swept the Italian fields,
And fought at Clusium, and with sword and flame
Humbled proud Rome herself; e'en Gallia yields
Willing submission, and no more appeals
To her own sword as arbiter of right.
Her million warriors, armed with spears and shields,
Melted away before great Cæsar's might—
Cæsar, adroit with pen, invincible in fight.

XXVIII.

Venetia, seated near the western main;
Avaricum, defended by strong walls;
Gergovia, towering far above the plain
That lies beneath; Alesia, of the Gauls
The last resort; each before Cæsar falls,
And swells his triumphs. Ambiorix brave,
And Vercingetorix, whom nought appals,
Long strive in vain their native hearths to save
From Roman thirst of power, insatiate as the grave.

XXIX.

Even Britannia, compassed by the sea,
That heaves and thunders on her winding coast,
From Rome's invading force has not been free.
There, Cæsar landed with his conquering host,
And o'er her tribes did many a victory boast.
Phœnicians, Carthaginians, long before
Had known this Island, and its trade engrossed ;
But all those realms that commerce can explore,
Roman ambition seeks, in search of wealth and power.

XXX.

Germania, whose fields and forests wide
Are roamed by nations warlike, fierce and wild,
Untaught the loom to ply, the plough to guide ;
On whom those gentle arts have never smiled,
Which soften manners, render customs mild ;
Where circumstances numberless combine,
From foeman's tread to keep her undefiled ;
Has often seen Rome's spears and helmets shine,
E'en in her forest depths, beyond the flowing Rhine.

XXXI.

Nor has she shrunk in terror from the sight.
Those who from polished skulls of victims slain
Can drink at martial feasts with keen delight,
Are not accustomed to behold with pain
The approach of war. Their pleasure is to stain
Their hands with human blood. Hence, when assailed,
The Germans, of their prowess justly vain,
To swell the tide of death have never failed ;
Often beneath their blows the Roman cohorts quailed.

XXXII.

Varus, by his unguarded conduct, learned
The secret of their bravery, to his cost ;
Augustus Cæsar, in deep sorrow, mourned
His veteran troops near the Visurgis lost ;
But Drusus, not in vain, the Rhenus crossed ;
And brave Germanicus avenged the blow
Struck by Arminius and his valiant host ;
Hence Noricum, Pannonia, Mœsia, show
That Rome is mistress where the Rhine and Ister flow.

XXXIII.

Egypt, the cradle of the liberal arts
And sciences, from her so widely spread ;
To which the Nile fertility imparts,
By flowing annually beyond its bed ;
Whose wondrous monuments of power have shed
Bright and unfading lustre on her name ;
Where reigned Sesostris, by whom thousands bled
To bind his temples with the wreath of fame ;
Egypt submission yields to Rome's imperious claim.

XXXIV.

Her pyramids and temples still remain ;
Her Pharos lifts its summit to the sky ;
But all her dynasties have ceased to reign :
Her Pharaohs and her Ptolemies now lie
All wrapt in death, some in obscurity.
Fair Cleopatra, whose seductions bland
Cost more than empire to Mark Antony ;
Rather than swell Augustus' triumph grand,
Rashly procured her death by her own guilty hand.

XXXV.

Judea, long defended by her race
Of Asmonean Princes, who displayed
Valour and skill, inflicting deep disgrace
Upon her Syrian foes, in vain essayed
To quell the fierce assault that Pompey made
Upon her Capital. 'Mid heaps of slain,
He passed her streets in martial pomp arrayed,
And, to the conquered giving deepest pain,
Durst, with impiety, their Temple Courts profane.

XXXVI.

Herod, the Idumean, styled the Great,
Whose hands with infant blood were deeply stained ;
Whose heart was wrung with Mariamne's fate,
And never after that his peace regained ;
Herod, from Rome the Jewish crown obtained ;
But fraud and cruelty await their fall.
The son, that filled his throne, was soon constrained
To leave his wide dominion and his all,
And, at remote Vienne, an exile live in Gaul.

XXXVII.

Judea's regal power exists no more ;
The sceptre from her hand has passed away ;
The time is come, predicted long before
By patriarchal prophet, when he lay
Upon his dying couch, and saw the day
In which the glorious Shiloh should appear.
No royal honours now does she display ;
Hence He, whose heart was pierced by cruel spear,
Fulfilled the prophet's word. No truth than this more clear !

XXXVIII.

Thus, o'er the fairest regions of the earth,
Its noblest rivers, valleys, mountains, plains,
Extends that empire, which derived its birth
From lawless hordes, more worthy far of chains
Than to give laws to man, or hold the reins
Of power. Upon the east Euphrates' tide
Limits her sway, and westward she maintains
Dominion, where the Atlantic ocean wide
Rolls its stupendous waves, on which her navies ride.

XXXIX.

Arabian, Lybian, and Gætulian sands,
Arid and sterile, scorched by tropic heat,
Limit her empire south. There, Nature stands,
In form of terror, to arrest her feet
Striding for conquest; while the snow and sleet
Of Scandinavia and Scythia yield
A northern barrier, which she dreads to meet.
Of power and grandeur what a boundless field!
What nations has she crushed, and trodden down, and peeled!

XL.

She forms the fourth great empire, imaged bright
By that terrific statue which was seen
By eastern king, in vision of the night,
Standing before him, robed in glory's sheen.
He longed to know what might this vision mean;
And yet the vision had escaped his mind.
In vain on his magicians did he lean;
Not one among their number could he find
To make the vision known, though strongly thus inclined.

XLI.

The form that had disturbed the monarch's rest,
Was a vast image with a golden head ;
Composed of silver were its arms and breast,
Which a less pure and brilliant lustre shed ;
Of brass its thighs and body, which, instead
Of equal beauty, did firm strength disclose ;
Its legs were made of iron, symbol dread
Of crushing power ; whereas its feet and toes
Iron and feeble clay, incongruous, did compose.

XLII.

The monarch in his vision, too, beheld,
Cut from a mountain, without human hands,
A stone, whose might the dreadful image felled,
And dashed in fragments, like minutest sands ;
Then, like a mountain, swelled and filled all lands.
None but the Hebrew prophet could unfold
'The wondrous mystery. The stern commands
Of haughty tyrants, never yet controlled
The only means by which the future is unrolled.

XLIII.

But Daniel told the dream, and then explained
Its solemn import to the monarch's ear ;
Developing the mystery it contained,
And showing great events that should appear ;
That Providence four empires vast would rear,
Which, in succession, would have powerful sway,
And by their conquests fill the world with fear ;
That each, in turn, would flourish and decay,
And, like all earthly objects, then would pass away ;

XLIV.

That He who reigns in Heaven, and controls
The affairs of earth, and bids the nations rise
Or fall, e'en as the mighty ocean rolls
Its angry waves tumultuous to the skies,
Or, smooth and placid, like a mirror, lies
Obedient to His voice ; that Heaven's King,
While the fourth empire should all else despise,
Would cause on earth a kingdom new to spring,
Which, 'neath its glorious sway, should all the nations bring ;

XLV.

That all the kingdoms, whether small or great,
Refusing homage to its peaceful reign,
Should, from its influence, meet disastrous fate,
Be rent in fragments, nor restored again ;
That all attempts to crush it would be vain ;
That, resting on foundation firm and sure,
In spite of all assaults, it would remain
Unshaken, mighty, glorious and pure,
And destined through all years, all ages, to endure.

XLVI.

Such was the import of this mystic dream,
Which subsequent events have rendered plain.
Like bubbles floating on the rapid stream,
Three of those powers are gone, nor will again
Bind subjugated nations in their chain.
The golden queen, that on Euphrates' tide
Sat in her beauty, of her riches vain,
And proud of her domains on every side,
Has ceased o'er conquered realms to spread her empire
wide.

XLVII.

Cyrus, sustained by an Almighty hand,
In spite of brazen gates and lofty walls,
And towers that in defiance seemed to stand,
Ravaged her streets, and stript her palace halls.
Her rapid desolation but recalls
Her former glory, now for ever fled ;
A dark and dismal solitude appals
Those who in Belus' lofty temple tread,
Where once a thousand lamps their brilliant lustre shed.

XLVIII.

The Medo-Persian empire, once so great,
Powerful and flourishing, has passed away ;
The battle of Arbela sealed her fate,
And doomed her royal cities to decay,
Her haughty Satraps now no more display
Their wealth and pomp, attracting every eye ;
Persepolis, in ruins, seems to say,
To every traveller that passes by,
All that can flatter pride and vanity must die.

XLIX.

The Macedonian power her race has run ;
Vanished her glory, like a dream of night ;
No longer Philip's most ambitious son
Causes the world to tremble at his might ;
Her brazen warriors, so renowned in fight,
To the famed Hyphasis no longer roam,
And, longing for their distant country's sight,
Complain that they are led so far from home.
No brave Nearchus steers his fleet through ocean's foam.

L.

Her wide dominion, gained by fire and sword,
Held by the magic of a single name,
When reft of him who sought to be adored
And worshipped as a god, forthwith became
A scene of discord kindled to a flame.
Intrigue, assassination, mutual hate,
And mad ambition, source of guilt and shame,
With civil insurrections, filled the state,
Destroyed the royal blood, and sealed the nation's fate.

LI.

Thus, all these empires vast have met their fall ;
The stream of time has swept their power away ;
But Rome, Imperial Rome, survives them all,
And smiles with conscious pride on their decay,
As if no future time would bring the day
When her own greatness, too, shall have an end :
She hopes that those who now their homage pay
Will never cease beneath her sway to bend,
But, to sustain her might, will still their treasures lend.

LII.

O Rome ! thou art indeed a fearful power ;
Well may the nations tremble at thy name !
How boundless thy resources, at this hour !
How vast thy treasures and how wide thy fame !
All objects that can human pride inflame
Are thine—wealth, valour, knowledge, might ;
Babylon's glory was but poor and tame,
Compared with that which greets the stranger's sight,
When first, on Tiber's banks, he sees thee robed in light.

LIII.

Genius and taste and opulence have crowned
Thy seven hills with marble structures fair,
Where luxuries from every clime abound,
Gathered at princely cost, with taste and care,
To please the palate or perfume the air.
Thine amphitheatres and baths, how grand !
To which thy citizens in crowds repair ;
Across thy streets triumphal arches stand,
And costly temples meet the eye on every hand !

LIV.

Vales, rendered verdant by a thousand streams,
To thee their rich, their annual tribute pay ;
The gold that glitters, and the gem that gleams,
Instinctive to thy coffers find their way ;
Even thy private citizens display
The wealth of monarchs, in their food and dress,
Their gorgeous feasts and entertainments gay.
Into thy port unnumbered treasures press,
Wrung from the poor, the wronged, the victims of distress.

LV.

How dearly hast thou purchased thy domain,
Thy wealth, thy grandeur, and thy great renown !
At what expense of labour, toil and pain,
And fearful crimes that waken Heaven's frown,
Calling upon thy head her vengeance down !
How many fields with carnage hast thou stained,
To deck thy brow with victory's fading crown !
Never a single triumph hast thou gained
At which stern Justice' voice has not to Heaven complained !

LVI.

When, at the close of a successful war,
Thy Consul, wreathed with laurel crown, has passed
Triumphant through thy streets, while at his car,
Full in the presence of the concourse vast,
Monarchs, with queens and children, rendered fast
By galling chains, have followed, bathed in tears,
And oft, for pity, looks imploring cast
On those whose voice of gladness filled their ears—
Thou hast reaped proudest joy from all their griefs and fears!

LVII.

Nor hast thou, in such hour of triumph, thought
Of all the thousands, in their wasted land,
To poverty and desolation brought
By blows descending from thy cruel hand,
Who, comfortless, without a shelter stand :—
Widows, whose hopes are crushed ; orphans, whose sighs
Tell that the voice is hushed whose accents bland
Oft, in their grieving hearts, bade joy arise ;
Sisters, whose brothers slain extort their piercing cries !

LVIII.

No : thou hast not remembered, in that hour,
Those who, from wealth and ease and station high
Hurled, in a moment, by thy vengeful power,
Have sunk to lowest depths, and longed to die ;
Who in distress have been compelled to fly
For shelter to the forest or the cave,
Or bear the storm beneath the open sky ;
Or, forced the gifts of Charity to crave,
Have found e'en Charity more cruel than the grave !

LIX.

The wealth of thy Patricians has been gained
By fraud, injustice, cruelty untold !
By tears of sad bereavement it is stained !
What fields luxuriant, crowned with waving gold,
And yielding ample food for young and old,
Hast thou not swept with desolating flood !
Over what cities fair hast thou not rolled
Thy conquering car, steeping its wheels in blood !
Would that some frost had nipt thy glory in the bud !

LX.

What didst thou do to Carthage ? Pledged thy word
Not to destroy her, though her deadly foe !
Yet soon as thou hadst torn from her the sword,
Which, still retained, would stern resistance show,
Didst doom her to the lowest depths of woe ;
To leave her home, her wealth, her graves, her all,
And when she shuddered at the dreadful blow,
And, bathed in tears, did loud for pity call,
Thou in thy wrath didst give, unmixed, the cup of gall !

LXI.

Carthage must be destroyed ! rung in thine ears
Whene'er thy Senate met, until, at last,
To put a full quietus to thy fears,
That irreversible decree was passed
Which swept her, like the dread Sirocco's blast.
The home of seventy myriads sank in flame !
Thinkest thou that baleful light did glory cast
Upon the proud escutcheon of thy fame ?
Alas ! what infamy it branded on thy name !

LXII.

Such, too, with less excuse, was Corinth's fate ;
For she had never filled thee with alarms,
Spread dire destruction through thy mighty state,
Made children tremble in their mothers' arms.
Though called the eye of Greece, not all her charms
Could win thee from thy purpose. Doomed to fire,
Her fame for art and beauty, which disarms
Ferocity itself, soothed not thine ire.
She saw, in one sad hour, her grandeur all expire.

LXIII.

Thou hast been cruel, not to those alone
Of different language, custom, country, clime ;
Oft has thine inhumanity been shown
To those who raised thee to thy power sublime.
Thy noblest sons, condemned without a crime,
Have lived in exile from their native land ;
Thy civil wars, remembered through all time,
Reveal the stain of blood upon thy hand,
Drawn from those very hearts which revered thy command !

LXIV.

Who all thy crowded streets with slaughter filled,
And cruelly proscribed and drove from home
Thy noblest citizens ? Whose blood was spilled
At famed Pharsalia ? Braving the rough foam
Of Afric's seas, to uphold the crumbling dome
Of Freedom's temple, who at Thapsus bled ?
At Munda, and at Philippi, O Rome !
Yes, and at Actium, whose blood was shed ?
Alas ! how deep the stains with which thy hands are red !

LXV.

Not merely avarice, or the love of fame,
Combined with fell revenge for injured pride,
Kindles thy thirst for slaughter to a flame,
And rolls the crimson wave in ceaseless tide:
Thine amphitheatres, on every side,
Crowded with gaping thousands ranged around,
Present to view their dread arenas wide,
Where combatants in mortal strife are found,
And conquered victims slain, lie weltering on the ground!

LXVI.

Even thy daughters fair behold the strife;
See mutual wounds inflicted with delight;
And when the prostrate victim begs for life,
Give the dread sign of death to end the fight;
As if it were to them a pleasing sight
To view the quivering lip, the staring eye
Of dauntless warrior dying in his might!
They who can weep at slightest danger nigh,
A cruel rapture feel to see the wretched die!

LVII.

And thou hast other sins to steep thy name
In blackest guilt—sins, for which Sodom fell,
Blasted beneath the Heaven-descended flame;
A fearful monument, designed to tell—
That every age might learn the lesson well—
The punishment reserved for works of night!
'Gainst every holy law dost thou rebel;
In deeds of infamy dost take delight;
Idolatrous, impure, debauched, abandoned quite!

LXVIII.

Even Tiberius, thy imperial lord,
To whom a hundred millions raise their eyes
For justice and protection, and whose word
To them brings life or death, ignobly flies
The duties of his station high, and lies
Dissolved in luxury, in Capræ's Isle.

There, amid scenes of guilt, he vainly tries
To gain content by courting pleasure's smile,
Ranking himself among the vilest of the vile !

LXIX.

O contrast wonderful, between thy Head
And Him who came on earth the lost to save !
Tiberius leaves a throne for luxury's bed :
Jesus exchanges Heaven for a grave !
The one ascends to sink, in sin's dark wave ;
The other stoops, o'er sin and death to reign !
The one to sensual lust becomes a slave ;
The other tears asunder slavery's chain !
Pain, that delights to inflict, and this, to save from pain !

LXX.

How deeply art thou stained with foulest crime !
Loudly thy deeds for retribution call ;
Nor can thy wealth and power avert the time
When sorest vengeance on thy head shall fall ;
Woes now await thee, neither few nor small ;
Heaven well remembers all that thou hast done
To fill the world with suffering and thrall ;
For every blood-stained trophy thou hast won,
Expect a chastisement conspicuous as the sun.

LXXI.

E'en now, like lions watching for their prey,
The fierce and wandering tribes of Scythia wild,
And those who round the distant Baltic stray,
On whom thy genial skies have never smiled,
Are longing to enjoy thy climate mild,
And reap the golden harvests of thy plains,
And sack and burn thy towns, with riches piled.
Avenging Providence shall loose their chains,
And give them ample leave, by fire, to purge thy stains.

LXXII.

Like mountain flood, descending from the North,
A second Hannibal shall sweep thy fields ;
His fierce and rugged warriors leading forth,
To slaughter him who fights and him who yields ;
Deaf as the grave to all the strong appeals
Of honour, virtue, innocence in grief ;
Alaric shall come, and all thy spears and shields
Shall seem like stubble to that haughty chief :
Then shall thy glory fall, like the seared autumn leaf !

LXXIII.

While his arms thunder round thy lofty walls,
No troops shall leave thee for a foreign shore,
To spread thine eagle's wing where glory calls ;
Thou wilt need all thy sons, and many more,
To save thee from the moment, sad and sore,
When barbarous Goths, like an o'erwhelming tide,
From all thy crumbling walls and towers shall pour ;
Thy paintings, statues, temples, all thy pride
And wealth, shall then display a scene of ruin wide.

LXXIV.

Yet thou art fearless now, and sitt'st, as queen,
On Tiber's banks, charmed with thy seven hills
Of old renown; proud of that glittering scene
Of art and taste, and wealth and power, that fills
Thy raptured vision. How thy bosom thrills
At sight of palace, temple, arch and tower!
So smiles the garden fair on which distills
The genial dew, the soft refreshing shower;
Blooming, yet soon to feel the dread Sirocco's power!

LXXV.

O! thou hast, in thy pride, upraised thy hand
Against the Anointed One, and with His foes
Hast joined to oppress Him. 'Twas by thy command
That he was slain. In vain against Him rose
The Jewish Scribes and Rulers. Thou hast chose
To add, to all thy other crimes, the guilt
Of having madly ventured to oppose
Him, by whose arm the universe was built;
By crucifixion thou Messiah's blood hast spilt!

LXXVI.

And thou hast sought to blot His memory quite,
By stationing thy guards around His grave:
As if thine Eagle, with resistless might,
His golden wings of victory could wave
O'er Him who came from sin and death to save!
But know, the long predestined hour is nigh,
When those thy veteran guards, however brave,
Appalled with fear, shall want the power to fly,
And, sinking to the earth, shall all unconscious lie.

LXXVII.

He whom thy guilty hand with thorns has crowned,
Thy spear has pierced, thy cruelty has slain ;
On whose pale lifeless body thou hast frowned,
Seeking to bind it in thy tyrant chain ;
Shall soon a richer, nobler triumph gain,
Than ever passed thy streets, or met thine eyes,
When, safe returned from fields of toil and pain,
With plundered wealth, 'mid captives' tears and sighs,
Thy consuls have been hailed with rapturous surprise.

LXXVIII.

A triumph, costing neither grief nor tears,
Nor pinching want, nor heart-corroding care,
Nor bitter agonies, nor torturing fears,
Nor ample fortune crushed beyond repair,
Like floating bubble vanishing in air ;
Causing no suffering one to weep or bleed,
Except Himself, who came to break the snare
Of Sin, and conquer Death ; He wept indeed,
And shed his precious blood to save us, in our need !

LXXIX.

Through thy vast empire thou shalt see Him ride,
Spreading His victories on every hand ;
And all thy gods in shame their heads shall hide ;
Nor Jove, nor Mars His progress shall withstand ;
Pallas, Apollo, with the inferior band
Of demi-gods, shall low before Him fall,
Or fly for refuge to some darker land.
In vain shalt thou resist ; in vain shalt call
On all thy sons to arrest His conquest over all.

LXXX.

Thy courts, inflicting penalties and pains
Dictated by a spirit come from Hell ;
Thy gloomy dungeons and thy clanking chains ;
Thy savage beasts, by hunger rendered fell ;
Thy tortures and thy flames will only swell
The triumphs of thy Conqueror, and show
That 'tis but worse than madness to rebel
Against that arm, whose might can overthrow
The strongest powers of earth, and crush them at a blow.

LXXXI.

Even thy Cæsar yet to Him shall bow,
And own himself a vassal of His crown ;
To Him shall daily offer up his vow,
Implore His smile, and deprecate His frown.
Those who resist Him, He will trample down,
E'en as the scattered dust or miry clay.
O Rome ! elated by thy great renown,
Humble thyself in dust ; His laws obey ;
Else shall thy glory bright like meteor pass away.

LXXXII.

Now smiles the Eternal Father on the tomb
Where lies His own Beloved One in repose ;
Well pleased to see the hour that ends its gloom,
And, to the just, deprives it of its woes,
And over all its dreary mansions throws
The cheering light of an eternal day.
Messiah's slumbers soon will find their close ;
Haste, welcome morn ; reveal that Heavenly ray,
Which, to the pure in heart, scatters all night away !

LXXXIII.

Thousands, in ages past, for thee have sighed,
And waited for thy coming. The first pair
Of human form, of Paradise denied,
For causeless sin, and doomed to toil and care,
And pain and death, beheld thee beaming fair,
And shedding on the grave thy heavenly light,
And scattering the shades of fell despair.
They hailed thee, glorious morn, and at the sight,
Toil, pain, and death itself, were all forgotten quite !

LXXXIV.

Abel beheld thee, when his bleeding lamb
He placed upon the Altar he had made ;
Seeking for his own wounded heart a balm
The world could not supply, he pierced the shade
Of future years, and thy remedial aid
Sought by the eye of faith ; nor sought in vain.
The lamb that on the Altar he had laid,
Showed him a nobler Lamb, that had been slain,
Yet lingered not in death, but rose to life again.

LXXXV.

Noah, long tossed upon the stormy wave,
Dark, restless, turbulent, without a shore,
And forming for the world a watery grave ;
When from above the clouds had ceased to pour,
And the great deep beneath withheld its store,
And the subsiding billows brought to rest
The floating ark, to wander now no more ;
Noah beheld thee from Armenia's crest,
When on the peaceful sky Heaven's signet-ring was pressed.

LXXXVI.

He saw thee beaming on a fairer world
Than that which, now revealed, rejoiced his sight,
And which for foulest crimes to ruin hurled,
Had from its watery tomb emerged to light ;
He saw thee scattering a darker night
Than that which late had wrapped in keen despair
The guilty victims of Jehovah's might.
The rapturous view of morn so bright and fair,
Made him forget the past, so fraught with grief and care.

LXXXVII.

Abraham saw thee, when he left his home,
His wealth, his kindred, all the heart holds dear,
In land far distant and unknown to roam.
To worldly prudence nothing could appear
More rash and foolish ; yet, without a tear,
He left his all, and sought a foreign strand.
It was thy light, sweet morn, that calmed his fear ;
By faith he saw thee, as if near at hand,
Gilding his every step while in a stranger land.

LXXXVIII.

And when, by Heaven's command, he bent his way,
Without consulting with a mother's tears,
To Mount Moriah far remote, to slay
His only son, arrived at manhood's years ;
And a soft filial voice fell on his ears,
Saying, My father, see the fire and wood,
But nothing here for sacrifice appears ;
And when he raised the knife to shed his blood,
And a kind voice from Heaven the uplifted hand withstood ;

LXXXIX.

And when he saw the ram in thicket caught,
As waiting for the sacrificial rite,
And this new victim to the Altar brought ;
Looking through coming years he gained a sight
Of Him who was the Father's chief delight,
His well-beloved Son, a victim slain,
And shrouded in the grave's oblivious night ;
Not in its dreary mansion to remain,
But speedily to rise, o'er Heaven and Earth to reign.

XC.

With grateful joy he saw thy rising dawn,
And, turning from Moriah's mount away,
Felt that his fears and sorrows all were gone,
And his path homeward lit by rapture's ray ;
Assured that future time would bring the day
When the whole earth should, in his seed, be blessed,
Nor longer in the wiles of error stray.
His faith revealed the sinner's Hope and Rest,
The Refuge of the poor, the burdened, the oppressed.

XCI.

And Jacob, when his eyes were dimmed by age,
And earthly scenes no longer cheered his sight,
Beheld, recorded on prophetic page,
The coming Shiloh's majesty and might.
He hailed the approach of thy first dawning light ;
It cheered his spirit on his dying bed,
And, piercing through the gloom of coming night,
E'en on the tomb a heavenly radiance shed,
Till, wrapt in calm repose, he slumbered with the dead.

XCII.

And those who ate the Paschal lamb, whose blood
Assured them of protection from the might
Of the destroying Angel, when his rod
Smote the first-born of Egypt, on that night
In which her millions trembled with affright—
Those who, in faith, did taste the victim slain,
Piercing the veil of time, obtained a sight
Of nobler Lamb to die and live again,
Whose blood should cancel guilt, and save from endless pain.

XCIII.

Hail loveliest morn of time's revolving years,
By patriarchs and holy prophets seen!
Seen by all saints, amid their toils and tears;
Shedding upon their path thy glorious sheen;
Making the desert which they trod seem green,
Perfumed with roses and in beauty dressed;
Thou gav'st to them a better hope, I ween,
Than earth can yield—a home of heavenly rest,
Of joy to broken hearts, of freedom to the oppressed.

XCIV.

Some were deprived of goods, slain with the sword,
Stretched on the rack, or tortured with the flame!
The world for them no shelter would afford;
Those who survived were doomed to want and shame;
Clothed in the skins of beasts, exiled they came
To caves and dens, for safety and repose;
Reviled and hated was their very name;
Yet, 'mid the barren rocks, their song arose
To Him, who gave thy light to cheer them in their woes.

XCV.

Despised, afflicted, and tormented sore
 'Mid nameless griefs, they gained the better land ;
Found peace and rest on that delightful shore,
 Where sorrow's tears are wiped, by the soft hand
 Of Him whose smiles eternal bliss command.
And now, descended from their own bright home,
 Around Messiah's lowly tomb they stand,
Waiting to see the happy moment come
When thou shalt rise, to cheer those who in darkness roam.

XCVI.

And angels, too, now look with ardent eye
 To catch the lustre of thine earliest ray,
And fill with notes of rapture earth and sky.
 The stars of heaven long to melt away
 In thy superior rays ; the king of day,
Emerging from the shadows of the night,
 Now hastes to lose his beams in that display
Of glory which thy coming brings to light.
Bright morn ! the whole creation waits to greet thy sight !

XCVII.

Hark ! the earth trembles to her depths profound !
 Convulsed, she heaves and staggers on her way ;
Now tyrant Death receives his mortal wound ;
 He whose delight has ever been to slay
 The frail and guilty creatures of a day,
Pierced to the heart, is filled with pain and fear ;
 Now morn reveals its long-expected ray,
Upward its radiance shooting, soft and clear,
The appointed signal given for Gabriel to appear.

XCVIII.

Instant this mighty angel, robed in white,
With lightning splendours beaming in his eyes,
Hailing the summons with intense delight,
Swift to the tomb on glittering pinions flies.
His presence fills the guards with sore surprise
And consternation. Reft of sense they fall ;
Stretched on the ground, each in his armour lies,
Nor sense, nor thought, nor motion can recall ;
Such power have spirits blest frail mortals to appal !

XCIX.

The ponderous adamant in Gabriel's hand,
Which like a feather seemed, is rolled away.
And were it Ararat, or Atlas grand,
When seized by one who can such power display,
No longer on its basis could it stay.
Forthwith the Conqueror of Death appears,
With crown triumphal seen in full display—
That crown which cost such agonies and tears,
Bright as ten thousand suns, enduring as the spheres !

C.

In adamantine chain, held by His hand,
Writhing in pain, with consternation filled,
And kneeling at His feet, is seen to stand
That dreaded Power, whose presence oft has chilled
The warmest hearts, and sudden fear distilled
Into the boldest ! All his might is gone !
His own hard heart is now with horror thrilled !
On his dark realms has risen that smiling dawn,
Whose still increasing light shall never be withdrawn

CI.

Now, through Messiah's form the Godhead beams
With more effulgence than on Tabor's height ;
Pouring, on all the hosts of Heaven, the streams
Of glory underived, and, with its light,
Rendering their brightness more intensely bright.
All cast their crowns with transport at His feet,
As, by one spirit moved, they all unite
His greatness, power and glory to repeat
In accents joyful, loud, harmonious and sweet.

CII.

Now, in full chorus, every voice is heard ;
Now quiver all the strings of golden lyres,
By angel fingers touched. Now deeply stirred
In every heart are pure devotion's fires.
Not one among the rapt celestial choirs
Is silent ; no discordant note is found ;
One are their songs, and one their warm desires !
Their Hallelujahs reach the depth profound,
Swell o'er the earth, and through the heavens resound !

CIII.

Now comes a solemn pause. In distant spheres,
With cadence sweet, the lingering music dies.
Again, Creation listening, ravished hears
New tones of heavenly melody arise,
Which wrap the earth, and mounting reach the skies.
The white-robed saints transported, all exclaim,
And dost Thou meet at last our longing eyes !
Thou, who for us didst bear the cross of shame !
Honoured and loved for ever be Thy glorious name !

CIV.

What sorrows hast thou felt, to give us joy !
How low descended, to exalt us high !
To gain for us a bliss without alloy,
Wipe every gushing tear, hush every sigh,
And that when we were rebels doomed to die,—
That glory which Thou hadst from endless years,
In highest Heaven, hiding from every eye,—
Thou cam'st, an exile to a vale of tears !
Ineffable, divine, Thy wondrous grace appears !

CV.

How poor our offerings, compared with Thine !
What thou hast done to save our souls from Hell,
And raise us to a Heaven of bliss divine,
Gabriel, with all his knowledge, cannot tell ;
Yet, when our hearts with love and rapture swell,
All is too low to celebrate thy praise !
Wake, earth and Heaven ! wake, all ye tribes that dwell
In distant worlds ! loud Hallelujah's raise !
Join all your tongues and harps, to aid us in our lays !

CVI.

Thus sing the ransomed, robed in pearly white ;
Instant the angels join them, and all cry,
With glowing hearts, and transports of delight :
Dominion universal, glory high,
Homage to Christ, through wide creation fly !
Blessing, thanksgiving, love, obedience pure,
From all above and all below the sky,
To Him whose laws are just, whose promise sure,
Whose mercy and whose grace to endless years endure !

CVII.

Thou mighty Conqueror of Death and Hell,
Gird on Thy sword, and forth in triumph ride ;
For hearts that dare withstand Thee, and rebel,
Make sharp Thine arrows, spread Thy victories wide ;
The powers of darkness all their heads shall hide
In dire confusion, when they see Thy face.
Where now Idolatry, and Lust, and Pride,
And all those crimes and errors that debase
And ruin souls, prevail, display Thy conquering grace.

CVIII.

Maintain Thy title to Thine own domain,
Purchased with blood and agony and tears ;
Long has it suffered under Satan's reign,
Who boasts the triumph of four thousand years,
O'er all the hopes that life itself endears ;
Subdue and claim the heathen as Thine own ;
Cleanse their pollutions, end their griefs and fears ;
In guilt and woe let earth no longer groan,
But come, with all her sons, and worship at Thy throne !

CIX.

Hail, Prince Anointed, Mediator, Lord,
Sovereign, whose righteous sway embraces all ;
We wait the intimations of Thy word,
In willing homage low before Thee fall,
Anxious in all things to obey Thy call :
No service irksome, when imposed by Thee,
Be it, in its own nature, great or small.
While Thou dost reign, and we Thy glory see,
Our highest bliss is safe through all eternity.

CX.

Thus sung the immortal choristers of Heaven,
And spread their glittering wings and soared away,—
Swift to fulfil the mandate that was given
When they departed from the Realms of Day,—
Anxious Messiah's victory to display
Throughout the Universe, and loud proclaim,
That He, who once in Death's dark mansion lay,
Now challenges all honour to His name,
As yesterday, to-day, for ever, still the same.

CXI.

One guard alone, of all the angelic band,
Near the deserted sepulchre remained,
Prompt to fulfil Messiah's high command.
The rest through distant space their flight maintained,
Still hymning, as they flew, the victory gained.
Jesus again his glory veiled from sight,
(No mortal eye its radiance had sustained,)
Soon by His presence to impart delight
To those whose hopes were now shrouded in sorrow's night.

CXII.

The Roman soldiers, soon as roused from sleep,
Which, like Death's image, awful and profound,
Had quite deprived them of the power to keep
The trust assigned them, rising from the ground,
Scarce conscious of the past, looked wildly round;
And when they saw the tomb was empty quite,
And its freed tenant nowhere to be found,
Fled from the wondrous scene with pale affright,
Longing to hide themselves in deepest shades of night.

CANTO VI.

THE SURPRISE.

BY OTTAVIO

AND HIS FRIENDS

CANTO VI.

THE SURPRISE.

ANALYSIS.

Women at early dawn approaching the sepulchre to re-embalm the body of their Lord.—Commended for their piety.—Treatment of their sex in heathen countries.—Benefits they will receive from Him they seek to honour.—Find the sepulchre empty.—Their grief.—Mary of Magdala, leaving the rest, hastens to the city to inform Peter and John of the sad event.—After her departure the other women enter the sepulchre, and see two angels who assure them that their Lord has risen, and bid them inform His disciples of the joyful news. They hasten to communicate it to the disciples, but their statement is not believed.—After their departure Peter and John come running to the sepulchre, followed by Mary.—They enter the sepulchre, and finding the body absent, depart in deep distress.—Mary remains behind weeping.—The Saviour appears to her.—Her rapturous surprise.—Hastens to communicate the news to the disciples.—The other women again return to the sepulchre, and making no new discoveries, depart, and on their way to the city are met by the Saviour.—Their transporting joy.—Commanded to carry the news to the disciples.—The guards, having recovered from their consternation, inform certain members of the Sanhedrim of what has occurred.—That body hastily convened.—Expedient which they adopt in order to suppress the facts of the case.—Folly of resisting truth.—Appearance of the Saviour to Peter.—He informs the other disciples that he has seen his Lord.—They credit his statement.—Their joy

JOY.

SISTER of Faith, and Hope, and Charity,
 (And seldom absent from thy sisters found,)
Thy native, chosen home is in the sky,
 Where songs of praise, prompted by love profound,
 From hymning saints and angel choirs resound.
Yet thou dost sometimes visit Earth's low sphere,
 Among frail mortals kindly take thy round,
And with soft hand wipe sorrow's bitter tear;
Else nought but Pain and Grief were our companions here.

Many the things we slight, and scarce endure ;
 Oft, in our pride and folly, we despise
The very means thy presence to ensure ;
 Yet never in our wayward hearts arise
 Low thoughts of thee, fair daughter of the skies.
Of other visitants the sight or stay
 Sometimes awakes our dread, our patience tries ;
Thee we would gladly welcome every day ;
For sad, indeed, our lot when thou art far away.

But, O how cheering thy benignant look,
 When long in sorrow's path our feet have trod !
'Tis like the gushing fount or crystal brook
 To weary traveller in desert broad,
 Without resource from man, or hope from God ;
For then, indeed, the radiance of thine eye,
 To mortal crushed beneath affliction's rod,
Lights up a rainbow on life's stormy sky,
More brilliant for the cloud of darkness hovering nigh.

Sweet is the blush of morn when night retires ;
 Sweet is the hour of rest when toil is done ;
Bright to the sailor's eye those beacon fires
 Which tell of home when the rough gale is gone ;
 Dear to the soldier's heart the victory won,
Through ceaseless labour, peril, strife and blood ;
 The wanderer, lost, with transport hails the sun
That guides him safely to his loved abode.
Thus welcome is thy smile, when after grief bestowed !

Still more transporting is thy presence fair,
 When, leading by the hand the nymph Surprise,
To Sorrow's victims crushed thou dost repair.
 What tumults in the bosom then arise !
 What raptures of the heart beam through the eyes !

So have I seen the blooming, youthful bride,
Watching, incessantly, with tears and sighs,
And vain attempts her inward grief to hide,
The form of one she loved, by pain and sickness tried.

When Death has seemed to press his urgent claim,
And blanched his cheek, and dimmed his sparkling eye,
And caused his pulse to flutter, like the flame
Of dying lamp which shows extinction nigh ;
And all has failed that skill or love could try,
To arrest the ebb of life's declining stream ;
O ! then on rapture's wings she seemed to fly,
To see thy presence 'mid the darkness beam,
Mingling thy sunny smile with health's returning gleam.

Such will thy welcome be to those who mourn
Their risen Saviour, thinking Him still dead.
O ! when they see Him from the grave return,
To cheer their hearts, and on their pathway shed
The light of Hope which, by His death, has fled ;
No longer will they weep their Master slain,
And in desponding sorrow bow the head ;
Assured that He has risen to life again,
Their notes of poignant grief will turn to rapture's strain.

How oft thy smile shall cheer us while we live,
Is best determined, not by our own will,
But by His gracious purpose, who can give
To grief a kind commission to fulfil
Our brightest hopes, better than rapture's thrill ;
But grant at least one visit ; let it be
When in the silent grave our hearts are still ;
Let us but then thy gladdening presence see,
And grace divine we'll praise, to all eternity !

I.

While blushing twilight, harbinger of Day,
Advances from the east, with silent tread,
And, from her robe of purple, strews her way
With thousand pearls that purest lustre shed ;
Ignorant that Christ has risen from the dead,
A lovely band of women seek His tomb,
By fondest reverence and affection led ;
Joy in their gentle bosoms finds no room ;
For grief is dwelling there, despondency and gloom.

II.

Among the rest, whose names, well known in Heaven,
Have ceased in human memory to be held,
Are Mary of Magdala, from whom seven
Fierce and malignant demons were expelled,
By Him who all the powers of darkness quelled ;
Mary, the mother of Saint James the Less,
Salome and Joanna, all impelled
By pious wish, with care and tenderness,
To re-embalm their Lord, who came on earth to bless.

III.

Him they had followed when, beneath the weight
Of His own cross, faint with the loss of blood
From thorn and scourge, the implements of hate,
He sought the Hill of Calvary. They stood
In view, when He was fastened to the wood
By rigid nails. They saw Him, on the tree,
Hanging in agony ; beheld the flood,
By cruel spear, from His pierced heart set free ;
And wept, in deep distress, such fearful woes to see.

IV.

And when, by leave from Pilate first obtained,
Joseph and Nicodemus had conveyed
His body, wrapped in linen robe unstained,
To the cold tomb, and there the treasure laid,
These women followed anxious, and surveyed
With reverent love its chosen place of rest.

While, round a spot so dear, they lingering stayed,
Each to the rest the strong desire expressed
To see the form they loved in costlier spices dressed.

V.

For love like that which in their bosoms lived,
Founded on virtuous principle, unstained
By selfishness or passion, and derived
From that Eternal Fountain, whence is gained
All of the good and beautiful obtained
On earth by man ; such pure and grateful love
Displays its power by charity unfeigned ;
Resembling Him who reigns in light above,
It seeks by kindly deeds its tenderness to prove.

VI.

Hence they agreed to purchase odours sweet,
Soon as the Sabbath rest should pass away ;
And named a place convenient where to meet,
When the next morn should show its earliest ray.
And now has come the designated day,
And they are hastening, in the twilight hour,
To the loved tomb their offering to pay ;
Thinking that still dark clouds around them lower ;
That gloomy Death retains their Master in his power.

VII.

Daughters of Salem, well may ye revere
Him whom ye seek among the silent dead !
A better friend to you will ne'er appear,
Around your path true peace and joy to shed ;
Heap then your highest honours on His head.
Not all the spices that ye fondly bear,
To wrap in fragrance Him who kindly bled
To vindicate your rights, ye daughters fair,
Can with His glorious name in sweetness once compare !

VIII.

See thousands of your sisters trodden down
By pride, ambition, avarice and lust ;
See fairest forms, crushed by the withering frown
Of those, in whom alone they fondly trust
For safety and protection. In the dust
They pine and weep, and refuge seek in vain.
See tender mothers from their children thrust,
Never to greet their welcome smile again,
Though fastened to their hearts by love's endearing chain !

IX.

Some, while their haughty lords in forest wild
Pursue the chase their needful food to gain,
Condemned to menial service, spurned, reviled,
Bear heavy burdens which they scarce sustain ;
As if their hearts were not alive to pain
And brutal treatment. Patiently, they bear
The beast that savage skill or might has slain ;
The bow, the quiver ; while, exempt from care,
Homeward, from sport or chase, their tyrant lords repair.

X.

Some to their own apartments are confined,
Like prisoners excluded from the light ;
As if they formed no part of human kind,
And needed but to learn that might makes right !
They dare not venture e'en to meet the sight
Of parents, brothers, husbands, kindred dear,
Without permission, but are banished quite
From social friendship's bright and joyous sphere ;
Their sole admirers Grief, and Servitude, and Fear !

XI.

Like cattle in the market, some are sold
To foreign masters never seen before ;
Their bleeding hearts are made the sport of gold.
Alas ! how poor are heaps of glittering ore,
And all the wealth that avarice can explore,
And jeweled ornaments and robes of state,
Contrasted with the bliss of minds that soar
Beyond the stars ! They seek a better fate
Than to become the slaves of avarice, lust, or hate.

XII.

Thousands, torn rudely from the fount of love,
Which mothers' warm and yearning breasts supply,
By short, yet terrible experience, prove
How much there is on earth of cruelty ;
Scarce on its guilty scenes they cast their eye,
When, seized by brutal hand, they're borne away,
On the cold ground alone, unwept, to die !
Fair, smiling infants, like the meteor's ray,
Just gleaming into life, then huddled up in clay !

XIII.

E'en mothers, copying that heartless bird
That straight withdraws her pity and her care
From the frail gifts that Heaven has conferred—
O! worse than this! E'en those called mothers dare
To exclude, at once, from food and light and air
Their helpless babes! They bury them alive!
Death is deemed cruel, beyond all compare:
They are more cruel still; for they contrive
To whet his taste for those who, else, would still survive!

XIV.

These unoffending little ones, thus doomed
By marble hearts to meet so dire a fate,
Who only wake to life to be entombed,
Like early buds by frost made desolate,
Are richer far than costly gems of state!
Were they improved, adorned, and rendered bright
With clustering virtues, which alone create
True loveliness and beauty, in the sight
Of Him who sits enthroned in majesty and light,

XV.

Pure joy might beam in all their glowing smiles,
Filling fond parents' hearts with transport sweet,
Till 'scaped, at last, from the seductive wiles
Of this unfriendly world, and rendered meet
Among the saints in light to take their seat,
Angels might bear them to their final rest,
Eternal smiles of friendship there to greet;
To hold delightful converse with the blest,
No more with grief and pain and sin and death distressed!

XVI.

Bear then your spices, Salem's daughters fair,
As a rich gift to Him who died to save ;
None has a higher claim your love to share,
For where He reigns woman is not a slave ;
Nor hurried prematurely to the grave ;
Nor made the victim of deceit and fraud,
And whelmed in ruin's dark and fearful wave ;
Nor made a puppet that vile fools applaud ;
But bears upon her brow the image of her God.

XVII.

More lovely ye appear, in angels' eyes,
While to the Saviour's tomb ye make your way,
Than if, adorned with gems and Tyrian dyes,
And glittering plumes, adapted to display
Your brightest charms, ye moved amid the array
Of wealth and fashion, cheered by sunny smiles
And fulsome flatteries from the rich and gay,
And all exposed to sin's seductive wiles.
He whom ye seek can bless ! Such pleasure but beguiles !

XVIII.

What though, completely rescued from decay,
Risen to a life that never can expire,
He needs not now the tribute ye would pay !
Yet, He regards your pure and warm desire
To honour Him, whom ye so much admire,
As far more precious than your odours sweet ;
Nor, without rich reward, shall ye retire
From His deserted tomb. Ye first shall meet,
With joy, your risen Lord, and worship at His feet

XIX.

Thus towards the sepulchre the sorrowing band
Pursue their journey, at the dawn of day ;
Perplexed, because they have no help at hand,
Whose power can roll the ponderous stone away ;
For well they know that vain were all essay,
By their own might, to heave it from its base ;
And yet, they fondly hope for some display
Of friendly aid to meet the painful case,
And give them access free to their loved Master's face.

XX.

They knew not that the Saviour's cruel foes,—
Resolved their selfish objects to secure,
And to the sepulchre all access close,—
Had placed a Roman Guard to make it sure ;
Else had been damped their zeal, however pure.
But Heaven was kind, such knowledge to withhold,
And obviate fears they could not well endure.
Christ ever will His watchful care unfold,
To all those burdened hearts by love to Him controlled.

XXI.

Now deeper blushes paint the eastern skies,
And now, emerging slowly to the sight,
The radiant orb of day begins to rise,
Scattering the latest shadows of the night,
And on the tomb deserted shedding light.
Hail, New Creation's Morn ! Hail, glorious Day !
Bright witness of Messiah's conquering might !
Ere Heaven or earth forget thy cheering ray,
They both shall ruined fall, or fading pass away !

XXII.

Just at this moment, filled with grief and fear,
Mingled with warm affection for their Lord,
The women at the sepulchre appear,
Prepared their pious offering to accord ;
But ah ! the tomb has lost its precious ward !
The stone that closed it once is rolled away ;
Changes most strange and fearful have occurred !
They search the place, and anxiously survey
The cold recess where once their honoured Master lay.

XXIII.

Who can describe the horror and surprise
Awakened in their bosoms, when they find,
On careful search, torn from their longing eyes,
The buried body of their Master kind !
To what rough treatment has it been consigned !
Who could have rudely borne it quite away,
And left the sheet and napkin still behind,
That first had wrapped in death the sainted clay !
What, on so dark a scene, can shed one gleam of day !

XXIV.

Perplexed, confounded, and with grief oppressed,
They know not what to do, or what to say ;
But Mary of Magdala leaves the rest,
And backward to the city makes her way ;
Anxious the gloomy tidings to convey
To John and Peter, if perchance their tears
Might soothe the woes that on her bosom prey,
Or, in a measure, dissipate her fears.
Sad, to their burdened hearts, the boding news she bears !

XXV.

During her absence from her sisters fair,
They all, as loth to leave so dear a place,
Within the recess of the tomb repair,
There to lament the sadness of their case ;
When, on the right, they see the radiant face
Of one whose home is in the distant skies—
An angel, robed in majesty and grace,
With love and pity beaming in his eyes.
They stand o'erwhelmed with awe, and startled with surprise.

XXVI.

They gaze a moment on the wondrous sight,
When, on the left, another form appears,
In robe of beauty whiter than the light ;
Both seem unwasted by the flight of years,
And youthful as that world that knows no tears.
Instant, before these shining ones they fall,
Yielding spontaneous to their whelming fears,
When a soft voice, adapted to recall
Their courage lost, reveals this cheering news to all :

XXVII.

Daughters of Salem, tremble not with fear,
Nor in desponding sorrow bow the head ;
Well do I know your kindly errand here ;
Ye seek your Saviour, who on Calvary bled,
And lately slumbered here, among the dead :
But ye will find Him in the tomb no more ;
For He has conquered Death, that Tyrant dread.
Did He not tell you He should rise, before ?
Seek not your Master here ; His sorrows now are o'er !

XXVIII.

Come, see the place where late your Saviour lay
In this cold tomb, to sweeten its repose ;
Then to His loved disciples speed your way,
And quickly to their grieving hearts disclose
Those joyful tidings that will soothe their woes ;
Tell them that He has risen from the dead,
And still remembers them, whom once he chose.
Go, pour the oil of joy on Peter's head,
And cheer his burdened heart, that oft with grief has bled.

XXIX.

Assure them that in Galilee, the place
Where oft they saw His love and power displayed,
They shall again with joy behold his face,
According to that promise which He made,
Before His body in the tomb was laid.
Thus the kind angel. Mingled joy and dread
Now seized the women, who no longer stayed.
Forth from the sepulchre in haste they fled,
To announce that Christ the Lord had risen from the dead.

XXX.

They now remember often to have heard
From His own lips, that he should be arraigned,
Condemned and crucified, and then interred,
And in the dark and silent tomb detained
Till the third day, when death would be constrained
To bow beneath his own victorious might ;
Yet, till the event the riddle had explained,
Its import to their minds was wrapped in night.
Now bursts upon His words a new and glorious light !

XXXI.

One great idea, beautiful, sublime,
Transporting beyond thought, replete with all
The longing heart can crave, absorbing time,
And all the interests of this floating ball,
Making its bliss or woe seem poor and small—
One great idea seems to fill their mind,
A *risen Saviour*, one whom they can call
Their chosen Friend, most powerful and most kind.
Blessed with His love, they feel to leave all else behind.

XXXII.

They speed their course, as if with wings endued,
Back to the Holy City, whence they came,
Anxious to gladden those who were imbued
With ardent love to Him, whose very name
Wakes in pure hearts of love the deathless flame.
They tell to His disciples the good news ;
How He, who suffered on the cross of shame,
Whom Scribes and Priests delighted to abuse,
Has risen from death, in spite of Romans and of Jews.

XXXIII.

But how do His desponding friends receive
The blessed annunciation ? When they hear
That He is now alive, do they believe ?
No ! Previous to his death they had no fear
That they should ever lose a Friend so dear ;
They thought that He, whose voice could cause the dead
E'en from their graves to rise and reappear,
Could never by his foes be captive led,
And die, and in the cold grave make His gloomy bed.

XXXIV.

But since they know that He has bled and died,
And proved their former expectations vain,
They think, so sorely has their faith been tried,
That He can never rise to life again;
At least while earth itself and time remain.
Not till the summons of the final Day
Shall wake the prisoners held in Death's strong chain,
Do they expect His smiles to chase away
Their griefs, and cheer their path with hope's enlivening ray.

XXXV.

Peter and John, meantime, who had been told
By Mary of the change that had occurred,
That some one from the tomb the stone had rolled,
And borne away the body of her Lord,
Feeling at once within their bosoms stirred
Both grief and tender love, resolved to go
And ascertain the truth of what they heard.
As if some friend had fallen by sudden blow,
They hasten to the tomb to view the scene of woe.

XXXVI.

Winged with intense desire, they speed their flight;
But John, the younger of the rival twain,
Arriving first, stoops down, and gains the sight
Of linen clothes that once had wrapped the slain;
And, while he gazes on the scene with pain,
As indication of some dire event,
Which baffles all his wisdom to explain,
Peter arrives, and enters, as if bent
Of the sad change alleged to know the full extent.

XXXVII.

He sees the linen that had wrapped His form ;
Also, the napkin, which apart is laid ;
But He who, 'mid the tumult of the storm,
Such wondrous power and majesty displayed,
Whom demons foul and Death itself obeyed,
Is gone ! The open coffin empty lies !
To solve the mystery, what can furnish aid ?
He scarcely ventures to believe his eyes,
But stands confounded, filled with sorrow and surprise !

XXXVIII.

John enters after Peter, and he, too,
Is witness to the same. They both conclude
The statement made by Mary to be true,
That persons, not with love of right imbued,
Within the tomb have ventured to intrude,
And borne the body of their Lord away ;
A shock, to their warm, sorrowing hearts, how rude !
They leave the sepulchre in sore dismay,
Enveloped in a cloud pierced by no cheering ray.

XXXIX.

For, what the Scriptures plainly have revealed
To those whose minds from prejudice are free,
Is, to their biased views, as yet unsealed.
Accustomed to expect that Christ would be
Invested with a temporal sovereignty,
And reign a conqueror o'er all His foes,
His character to them seems not to agree
With that which recent painful facts disclose.
The whole seems dark as night, and threatening further woes.

XL.

Slow and desponding, from the sacred place
Where once, in death, their honoured Master lay,
They homeward tend, discussing the strange case,
And mutually deploring, by the way,
The dire event which blots out the last ray
Of consolation from their sorrowing breast.
But after stormy night, how bright the day !
After exhausting toil, how sweet is rest !
Soon shall their present griefs but render them more blest !

XLI.

But Mary of Magdala, who had given
To them the woful tidings, and had failed
To equal them in speed, and had arriven
Before they left the tomb—with grief assailed,
Mary remained behind ; for love prevailed
Over all other feelings and desires—
Love to that form to the dread cross once nailed :
She could not quench its pure and hallowed fires.
Woman clings to the tomb ; despairing man retires !

XLII.

While at the open door she weeping stands,
Chained, like a statue, to a spot so dear,
Which all her warmest sympathies commands ;
Stooping to look within, she sees appear
At each extreme, and near the empty bier,
On which her Saviour's sacred form once lay,
Two beings that had come from higher sphere,
And far too glorious to be sons of clay.
Angelic beauty, grace and sweetness, they display.

XLIII.

Their robes are snowy white ; their radiant eyes
Beam with pure love ; their forms are passing fair.
As if they would prevent too much surprise
In Mary's sorrowing heart, they seem, with care,
Their own excessive brightness to impair ;
Disclosing only, to her wondering sight,
So much of glory as she well can bear.
As, in the temple, cherubim of light
Looked on the mercy seat, illumed with glory bright ;

XLIV.

So, at each end of the deserted bier,
On which the true Shekinah once did lay,
These pure angelic messengers appear,
To drive from Mary's heart her griefs away.
Hence, in soft accents, without more delay,
As if they loved to dissipate her fears,
They to the sad and weeping mourner say :
Pray tell us, woman, whence those gushing tears ?
Because, was her reply, not here my Lord appears !

XLV.

Within this tomb, in grave-clothes wrapped around,
Lay one, to me more dear than tongue can tell ;
But now He's gone, and nowhere to be found !
Why should not, then, my tears of sorrow swell !
His wondrous kindness I remember well,
And grieve to think, that now, I cannot show
My love to Him who broke the dreadful spell
That once involved my soul ; who made me know
All of substantial bliss I have enjoyed below !

XLVI.

Thus having spoken, Mary turned her eye,
And instant saw her Saviour standing near,
Yet knew not that her honoured Lord was nigh ;
For, not in wonted form did he appear,
Lest she should be o'erwhelmed with sudden fear.
He would not pain a heart already sad,
Nor add to sorrow's fount a single tear ;
He wished her grieving heart to render glad ;
Hence, in the gardener's form and aspect He was clad.

XLVII.

Her He accosted thus, in accents kind :
Why, in deep sorrow, dost thou weep and mourn ?
What dear and absent friend seek'st thou to find ?
To this address she answered thus, in turn :
Sir, if my Master thou away hast borne,
Pray tell me where His body has been laid ;
O ! treat not this, my earnest suit, with scorn !
Let me but find it ; it shall be conveyed
To some secluded spot, for rest and quiet made !

XLVIII.

Assuming, then, His wonted voice and tone,
Mary ! said He. Instant she fixed her eyes
Upon her Lord, and saw the gardener's form
Merge into that of Jesus. With surprise
And joy, which even to highest rapture rise,
And which no powers of speech can ever tell ;
Quick from her lips the exclamation flies :
My Master ! Prostrate at His feet she fell,
And clung, as if 'twere bliss for ever there to dwell !

XLIX.

No other language did her lips repeat ;
Words were but poor her feelings to express ;
With her warm tears she bathed His sacred feet ;
Not those of bitter anguish and distress,
For now no longer on her bosom press
The weighty sorrows which she felt before,
But tears of mingled joy and tenderness.
Delighted that her troubles now are o'er,
She cannot let Him go, or leave His presence more !

L.

Touched with her deep devotion, Jesus said,
In accents mild, benevolent and kind :
Mary, detain me not ! Be not afraid
That thou, hereafter, wilt not often find
Occasions to display, if so inclined,
Thy warm affection to thy Lord and Friend ;
The time, by Heaven's unerring will assigned,
When to my Father's face I shall ascend,
Has not arrived, as yet, my stay on earth to end.

LI.

Do not forget how many hearts are sad,
Hearts bound to mine by more than brother's ties ;
Soon by thy message thou canst make them glad ;
Go ! wipe the tears from many weeping eyes ;
Fill my disciples' hearts with sweet surprise !
Tell them that to my Father and my God,
As well as theirs, I shall hereafter rise ;
That having the dark vale of death once trod,
I live to bless my friends, and spread my love abroad !

LII.

Obedience implicit is the test

Of genuine love to Him who died for man ;

Hence, Mary, though she felt divinely blest

At Jesus' feet, instant arose, and ran

To bear those tidings which she thought would fan,
Into a glowing flame, the love of those

Whom, to fulfill His wise and gracious plan,

As His own special friends, her Lord had chose.

She longed to cheer their hearts, now sunk in deepest woes !

LIII.

She sought and found the followers of her Lord,

And straight conveyed to them the message given ;

Dwelling with transport sweet on every word ;

And yet, so sadly were their bosoms riven,

So deeply had the shaft of death been driven

Into their souls, that they could not believe

That He, once dead, was now the Lord of Heaven !

Some faintly hope ; others still pine and grieve.

From nothing but His smile full joy can they receive.

LIV.

Thus, to the pious Mary, who had shown

Love unexampled to her glorious Friend ;

That Friend His personal presence first made known,

To cheer her heart and bid her sorrows end.

Mary ! thy tears of love a radiance lend

Purer than that which sparkling gems display !

Shine on, bright star ! thy cheering lustre send,

To light the vale of sorrow with its ray,

And gladden mourning hearts till time shall pass away.

LV.

Soon after Mary, for the second time,
Had left the tomb ; and now, no longer mourned
Her Saviour, who had risen to power sublime ;
Those women to the Sepulchre returned,
Who, from the Angel Messengers, had learned
Messiah's resurrection from the dead ;
And, to proclaim the tidings much concerned,
Had quickly to the Holy City fled.
Back to the tomb they came, by warm affection led.

LVI.

'Tis not enough from Angels' lips to hear
That He has risen. They long His smile to greet.
Hence, at the sacred spot they reappear ;
Hoping, at length, their Master there to meet,
And with their tears of rapture bathe His feet.
Alas ! they linger near the place in vain !
Their search around the tomb they oft repeat,
Until, at last, compelled to leave with pain,
They slowly to the city bend their steps again !

LVII.

But none who seek the Prince of Life to find,
Burdened with sorrow, and from motives pure,
Shall ever prove Him distant or unkind ;
Trial of love and faith they may endure,
Their spiritual improvement to secure ;
But when the trial has obtained its end,
His presence to the longing heart is sure.
His smiles, to those who seek Him, He will lend,
And show Himself, to such, a sympathizing Friend.

LVIII.

Thus with these women. While, with tearful eyes
And grieving hearts, their mournful way they wend
Back to the city, what is their surprise
And rapturous joy, to meet their glorious Friend,
And find at once their doubts and sorrows end !
All hail ! said Jesus. Instant, at His feet,
With cordial love and homage, deep they bend,
And clasp them round, with tears of transport sweet.
The name that fills their hearts, their lips cannot repeat !

LIX.

Again, in tones of love, which none but He
Ever could pour upon the human ear,
To set their hearts from dread entirely free,
Daughters, He said, indulge no anxious fear,
Because I from the grave alive appear ;
Go, tell my brethren that I live and reign,
And from their eyes will soon wipe every tear ;
I'll meet them all in Galilee again,
And prove to them their hopes in me are not in vain.

LX.

At once they rose obedient to His voice,
With quickened step the tidings to convey
To other minds, that they too might rejoice
To find the cloud of sorrow pass away.
Cheered on their path by Hope's enlivening ray,
They exult to think that, not upon the dead,
While in the darksome grave He silent lay,
But on the living they their tears have shed ;
While at His sacred feet they lowly bowed the head.

LXI.

While thus they haste the joyful news to tell,
The Roman guards, recovering from the fear
That long had wrapped them in its dreadful spell,
Within the city walls at length appear,
And give, without delay, a statement clear
To the Chief Priests, of what had late occurred.
The account presents a prospect dark and drear !
The priests, alarmed at once at what they heard,
The council to convene quickly themselves bestirred.

LXII.

The members of the Council met in haste ;
Terror appeared to sit in every eye.
They felt alarmed, lest they should be disgraced,
And hurled for ever from their station high ;
Hence, every art they were resolved to try,
The truth to stifle, and its force suppress.
Alas ! to what expedients those will fly,
Who long have tampered with unrighteousness !
Nothing but fraud, they thought, could save them from distress.

LXIII.

Hence, they engaged to give a large reward,
Their own nefarious purpose to obtain,
To all the members of the Roman guard,
Provided that their conscience they would stain
With the deep guilt of falsehood, and maintain
That, while they slept, Christ's own disciples came
And stole away His body. Love of gain
Would tempt the soldiers to this deed of shame ;
Although it shed disgrace upon their vaunted name.

LXIV.

But other fears disturbed them ; for they knew
'Twas death for soldiers at their post to sleep.
How could they venture to declare as true
What would involve them in a crime so deep ?
Could they afford to sell their lives so cheap ?
The artful Councillors, to gain their end,
Engaged secure the lives of all to keep,
By making Pilate their peculiar friend,
Who, to subserve their wish, his influence would lend.

LXV.

Well did the soldiers know, that the same gold
Which tempted them, would tempt their Roman lord ;
That justice often had by him been sold ;
And, hence, 'twas safe for them to trust the word
Of those who promised that, which most absurd
To men of upright purpose must appear.
They felt assured that Pilate would accord,
If not from love of lucre, yet from fear,
Even this strange request, when offered to his ear.

LXVI.

Hence, they agreed to accept the bribe proposed,
And thus, a story bearing on its face
A falsehood plain, to every eye disclosed,
Was long permitted to assume the place
Of sober truth among that guilty race,
Who nailed their own Messiah to the tree.
What a return for all His love and grace !
What dreadful proof, how hard the heart can be,
When not from error vile and prejudice set free !

LXVII.

If they were all asleep, how could they know
That such event occurred? But if not all,
If some of them beheld the robbers go
Corse-burdened from the tomb, would they not call
Their comrades to arrest, and hold in thrall
Those who had ventured thus to rob the grave?
Could Christ's poor helpless followers appal
Sixty armed Romans, fierce as they were brave;
Each one of whom a sword or trusty spear could wave?

LXVIII.

Suppose the Sanhedrim indeed believed
That what the soldiers spread abroad was true;
Why did they not, as honest men aggrieved,
Examine, thoroughly, those whom they knew
To be the leaders of the little few
Who staked their all upon the Nazarene?
Was not a strict examination due?
How could it otherwise by all be seen
That justice ruled their hearts, and not mere pride or spleen?

LXIX.

If there were no collusion in the case,
Why were the soldiers suffered to go free?
Why were they not examined, face to face,
In legal form, that all the world might see
Whether the corpse of Him who, on the tree,
Had bled and died, were nowhere to be found?
For such neglect, what reason could there be,
But dread to meet the proofs that would abound,
That He had risen who late had slumbered 'neath the ground!

LXX.

They showed their prudence by remaining still,
And giving credit to a well known lie ;
No other course so likely to fulfill
Their wish to stifle what none could deny,
If proof were spread before the public eye.
How deep their guilt ! What shall dispel their fears,
Or whither, for protection, shall they fly,
When He, who once deplored their fate with tears,
As their Eternal Judge, throned in the clouds, appears !

LXXI.

Against unwelcome truth bar we the heart,
And long compel her there to plead in vain !
She takes her stand, and never will depart ;
She knows her rights, and will those rights maintain ;
And, soon or late, will full admittance gain ;
But if resisted, stubbornly repelled—
If e'en her very presence wakens pain—
O ! if to force admittance she's compelled,
Fearful her penalty, for rights so long withheld !

LXXII.

The fortress often summoned, that hurls back
A proud defiance to her utmost might,
When won at last, is given up to sack
And desolation, as the conqueror's right,
And finds no quarter in the dreadful fight.
With flaming sword she enters, to disclose
Her awful form of majesty and light
That flashes terror on her stubborn foes !
They quail beneath her frown, o'erwhelmed in deathless
woes !

LXXIII.

What though she seem to meet us with a frown,
And flourish, in her hand, correction's rod,
She seeks not, in the dust, to tread us down,
As if she were a tyrant, at whose nod
Slaves crouch, and long to hide beneath the sod ;
Her aim is not to crush us, but to save ;
To lead us to our Father and our God,
Where, rescued from the sweep of ruin's wave,
We may no longer dread sin, sorrow, or the grave.

LXXIV.

O! had these blinded councillors but known
Their highest good, their everlasting peace,
How gladly had they bowed before her throne!
Then she had bid their gathering sorrows cease,
And freely granted them a full release
From threatened judgments. Then those mighty woes,
Whose horrors Fancy scarcely can increase,
Brought upon Salem by her haughty foes,
Had never been ; kind Heaven had given her sweet repose !

LXXV.

We turn to Peter now, who once, from fear
And guilty shame, his Master had denied ;
A deed that cost him many a bitter tear,
And made him often wish his head to hide.
A piercing shaft was clinging to his side,
Inflicting constant pain. He found no rest,
Until his Lord His skillful hand applied,
Withdrew the shaft, and healing balsam pressed
Upon the bleeding wound, which stanch'd as soon as dress'd.

LXXVI.

He who had, thus, bestowed a rich reward
On those who sought Him, at the early dawn,
And met their tearful love with kind regard,
Now clearly showed that He had not withdrawn
His smiles from him who far astray had gone,
And mourned in secret o'er his recent fall.
While in retirement Peter sits alone,
Weeping, endeavouring vainly to recall
His former peace and hope ; while fears appal,

LXXVII.

And sorrows on his labouring bosom press,
And all the future wears the hue of night ;
His Master comes to end his deep distress,
And fill his heart with rapturous delight,
And wipe those tears that long have dimmed his sight.
Scarce daring to look up, he lifts his eye,
And meets a smile of love, intensely bright,
From his own honoured Master standing nigh.
It thrills his heart with love, and peace, and rapture high.

LXXVIII.

Yes, it is true ! He knows that cheering voice,
That calm, majestic eye, that lovely form,
That Friend who oft had made his heart rejoice,
Whose power had quelled the tumult of the storm,
And who had interposed His potent arm
And caught him, sinking, in the angry wave.
He yields, at once, to the resistless charm
That wraps his soul. His Saviour, from the grave,
Reveals Himself alive, omnipotent to save !

LXXIX.

How shall he greet Him ? In what terms of love,
Of gratitude, of penitence, of joy,
Of homage deep, of worship, shall he prove
His warm attachment ? He can but employ
His tears and sobs. His feelings rapt destroy
All power of utterance. To His feet he clings,
And feels that he has peace without alloy ;
That now he bows before the King of kings,
Whose triumph over death all Heaven with transport sings !

LXXX.

In accents soothing, condescending, kind,
His Saviour bids him know his pardon sealed,
Before his lips disclose his secret mind ;
For, to His eye omniscient, stands revealed
Peter's whole heart, which warmly has appealed
Already, to His free, forgiving grace.
No longer, now, he bears a wound concealed ;
The smile of joy once more illumines his face,
Mingled with love to Him who pitied his sad case.

LXXXI.

At length his Master bids him go in peace,
And carry to his friends the joyful news,
That He, whose love can make their sorrows cease,
In spite of angry priests and threatening Jews
Is now alive, and never will refuse
To succour those who to His bosom fly
For refuge, when their enemies accuse ;
That though, by hate, unjustly doomed to die,
He lives, to die no more, but reign in glory high.

LXXXII.

Peter obeys the welcome summons given,
And flies, with utmost speed, the news to bear,
To those whose hearts with fear and doubt are riven.
He flies, not loaded now with grief and care,
As when, with John, he hastened to repair,
At early hour, to the deserted tomb ;
For then he almost yielded to despair ;
Now, in his heart despair can find no room,
For Christ, in triumph risen, has scattered all his gloom.

LXXXIII.

Arrived, at length, in tones of liveliest joy
He pours the cheering news into their ears ;
Exclaiming : Now your songs of praise employ ;
Dismiss your gloomy doubts and anxious fears ;
Our glorious Master from the grave appears ;
Death He has conquered, life has brought to light ;
He comes to dry the fountain of our tears,
And give us safety by His arm of might ;
Soon will your risen Lord greet your enraptured sight !

LXXXIV.

The grieved disciples, who, so long, had trod
A path divested of Hope's cheering ray,
And felt themselves forsaken of their God,
Now first behold the darkness pass away,
And hail with joy the beams of rising day.
The angel's message they had heard in vain ;
What Mary was commissioned to convey
To their sad hearts, had not relieved their pain ;
Nor had they ceased to doubt, when, from the tomb again

LXXXV.

The women had returned ; and all concurred
To state the same ; that plainly, with their eyes
Of sense, they had beheld their risen Lord.
These tidings strange awakened their surprise,
But caused not the bright star of Hope to rise.
Clouds dark and dense still hovered o'er their head,
Giving no signs of fairer, brighter skies ;
In error's maze so long they had been led,
They could not think their Lord had risen from the dead.

LXXXVI.

Sweet is the hour that sets the prisoner free
From galling chain, and dungeon dark and deep ;
Where, reft of home and light and liberty,
His only solace is to mourn, and weep,
And sigh, and long for death's oblivious sleep.
Sweet is the hour which breaks his dreadful chain,
And bids him from his cell with rapture leap,
And hail the earth, the sky, the sun again,
And listen to the lark trilling her joyous strain.

LXXXVII.

To these poor, withered hearts, the news thus sweet,
That He who once was dead now lives and reigns.
They long to see Him, long to clasp His feet,
And fill His ear with rapture's noblest strains,
And tell Him all their griefs and all their pains,
And greet His smile, and see His loving eyes,
And trace His steps once more o'er hills and plains,
Where oft He kindly hushed the mourners' sighs.
Each thought of Him they love bids higher joys arise !

CANTO VII.

THE JOURNEY.



CANTO VII.

THE JOURNEY.

ANALYSIS.

Apostrophe to Faith.—Morning of the first Christian Sabbath described.—Just before the second return of the women from the sepulchre, two of the disciples leave the city for the village of Emmaus, the place of their residence.—While prosecuting their journey and conversing together concerning recent events, Jesus himself in an unknown form joins their company, and inquires into the subject of their conversation.—One of them, named Cleopas, relates the recent transactions in Jerusalem.—The Saviour, in reply to his statements, informs them that they entertain erroneous views of what the prophets have predicted; and proves by various considerations that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah.—On their arrival at Emmaus, they invite Him to tarry with them.—He accepts of their invitation, and, while seated with them at the table, discloses Himself in His real character, and immediately vanishes.—They return to Jerusalem without delay, and find the disciples assembled, who inform them that Peter has seen the Saviour alive.—They then relate their own interview with Him, and, in the midst of their communication, Jesus Himself appears.—They are terrified by His sudden appearance, supposing Him to be a spirit.—He soothes their apprehensions, satisfies them that He is not a phantom, and discloses to them the object of His death.—Their rapturous joy.

FAITH.

O FAITH! without thy presence and thy power,
Our minds to illumine, and our hearts to cheer,
Eternal night would o'er our prospects lower;
The universe itself would then appear
A mighty chaos, formless, dark and drear;
Or rather, it would vanish from our sight,
And leave us but the prey of guilt and fear.
When thou dost come, and show thy presence bright,
Mind, matter, beauty, bliss, are instant brought to light.

We then behold, pervading time and space,
Existence boundless, underived, divine ;
A power that ceaseless acts in every place ;
A wisdom that no language can define ;
A light and glory that intensely shine ;
A goodness that our highest thought transcends ;
Of Truth and Love a rich, exhaustless mine ;
A Being infinite, who never ends,
Who always hates the wrong, and right and truth befriends.

We see, like sparks from steel, resplendent suns
Flash, in the depths of ether, from His hand ,
Which monarchs seem, upon their gorgeous thrones,
Round whom are ranged, in order glorious, grand
And beautiful, as heeding their command,
Millions of subject worlds replete with joy ;
Upheld, controlled by Him, they move or stand,
And songs and choral symphonies employ,
To herald Him whose smile is bliss without alloy.

We see far off, beyond the vale of time,
Robed in celestial beauty, beaming bright,
A fairer world than ours ; a blissful clime,
That knows no mist or cloud ; no storm, no night ;
No chilling frost the bowers of life to blight ;
No sundered ties, no anguish, grief, or care ;
Where spirits deathless, clothed in robes of light,
Breathing the fragrance of immortal air,
Enjoy consummate bliss that age cannot impair.

Our own unhappy world, long robed in night,
And often fitly styled a vale of tears,
Thy presence gilds with pure, celestial light,
That banishes our sorrows and our fears ;
For here the Eternal Source of good appears,—
Amid the dire confusion, guilt and woe,
That boast the spoil of many bitter years ;—
The reign of sin and death to overthrow,
And on the pure in heart eternal life bestow.

Thou showest us a spotless victim slain,
By wicked hands, to expiate our guilt ;
And render snowy white its deepest stain,
By precious blood, freely on Calvary spilt ;
A Saviour, e'en before the world was built,
Designed to be our Advocate and Friend ;
Who in His own pierced heart our sorrow felt,
And who, to all that feel their need, will lend
His mighty power and grace, their cares and griefs to end.

We see Him rising glorious from the tomb ;
Leading in triumph, conquered by His hand,
The monster that had filled the grave with gloom ;
A prince victorious we see Him stand, }
With love and pity pointing to that land
Where sickness, pain and death are known no more ;
Offering to take us under His command,
And safely lead us to that peaceful shore,
To whose stupendous bliss no thought of ours can soar.

Blind unbelief would wrap, in endless night,
The universe of matter and of mind ;
In one vast grave would hide it from our sight ;
But thou, O Faith ! art like that angel kind,
Who, to the grateful task by Heaven assigned,
Rolled from the Saviour's tomb the stone away,
And left its egress free and unconfined,
Through which the smiling Conqueror sprang to day.
Thus smiles the universe beneath thy cheering ray.

Guide of the weary traveller, cheering friend
Of the benighted in the hour of woe,
Direct our steps, thy constant presence lend,
While onward to a brighter world we go ;
And should our path more dark and thorny grow ;
Should clouds accumulate and wrap the sky ;
Should tempests beat, and sweeping torrents flow,
We will not fear if thou art standing nigh ;
Eternal rest and peace revealing to our eye !

I.

The pearly drops that, in morn's earliest ray,
Sparkled like jewels hung from beauty's ears,
Gently exhaled, have silent passed away.
Nature is now no longer bathed in tears,
But, smiling, in her brightest charms appears.
Upward the sun, rejoicing, speeds his flight,
As if relieved at length from chilling fears ;
Gilding fair towns and cities with his light,
And wrapping boundless realms in robes of glory bright.

II.

The vernal choirs exult, and sweetly trill
Their mellow notes. Disporting in the air,
The insects, murmuring melodious, fill
The listening ear with sounds dispelling care.
The flocks and herds, in flowery meadows fair
Peacefully graze, or quiet take their rest,
Or to the shade or rippling brook repair.
Through vales, o'er hills, and to the mountain's crest,
Joy sends her voice to all, inviting to be blest.

III.

No vapour rests upon the sloping side
Of towering hill ; no mists obscure the vale ;
No cloud displays its folds the sun to hide ;
No earthquake rocks the ground ; no rushing gale
Prostrates the forest, or sweeps through the dale ;
No harsh and grating sounds disturb the ear,
Such as with terror cause the heart to fail !
But such as, soft, melodious and clear,
Are suited, by their tones, to gladden and to cheer.

IV.

Never did brighter, fairer morning shine

On this our world of darkness, guilt, and woe,
Since, torn from Eden's bliss by wrath divine,

Sinful, frail, dying man was doomed to know

How much of blessedness those hearts forego,
That spurn the mandates of the Holy One.

Heaven seems in love to smile on all below ;
Jehovah, bending from the Eternal throne,

Looks on the ransomed earth, and claims it as His own.

V.

Morning of peace and love ! thou seem'st to smile

In kindly sympathy with Him who lay

In the cold grave, for sinners lost and vile,

Yet rose to life with thy first dawning ray ;

Leaving behind the cheering light of day,

To guide our footsteps through the dreadful shade.

Shine on, blest morn ! thy fairest beams display

To cheer the heart of Him, who bowed His head

In sorrow, on the cross, and slumbered with the dead !

VI.

Mingling his beams with thine, a brighter Sun

Than that which robes thy beauties with its light,

Has through the smiling heavens His race begun,

Never to end, till, freed from moral night,

The world shall stand revealed in glory bright,

Rejoicing in His pure benignant rays ;

And all her tribes, with transports of delight,

While basking in His clear meridian blaze,

As with one heart and tongue, shall sound His lofty praise !

VII.

How welcome is thy visit ! O how blest
Thy brightening rays of love and joy, to those
Whose hearts so long have known nor peace nor rest,
Friendless and sad, exposed to bitter foes !
Thou com'st to bring their sorrows to a close.
Faith treads upon thy steps with looks serene ;
Hope follows after, and around her throws
A light divine, that gladdens all the scene ;
They who were sunk in grief, assume joy's smiling mien.

VIII.

And yet not all. Two of the Saviour's friends
Still grieve and mourn. Hope sheds not yet her light
On their dark path. That vigorous faith, that ends
Suspense, has not arrived to scatter night.
Soon after those who saw the vision bright
Of angels in the tomb, from whom they learned
The Saviour's resurrection, with delight
Had told the news ; these men, who now sojourned
With Christ's selected friends, to their own home returned.

IX.

The village, whither they pursued their way,
Emmaus, the usual place of their abode,
Distant from Salem, sixty furlongs lay.
While slow and sad they passed along the road,
Their solemn conversation clearly showed
That something of deep import filled their mind.
Their thoughts in the same channel constant flowed ;
They seemed to every other object blind,
Save that which had respect to their loved Master kind.

X.

With bitter recollections deeply pained,
They oft recounted what their Lord endured ;
How, as a criminal, He stood arraigned,
And was condemned, though Pilate was assured
That He was guiltless ; how the Scribes procured,
That e'en the vile Barabbas should go free,
To compass His destruction ; how, allured
By fell revenge and envious bigotry,
They nailed Him, in their scorn, to the accursed tree !

XI.

While thus proceeding, slowly, on their way,
Conversing of the scourge, the cross, the spear,
And all the sufferings of that dreadful day,
Which, e'en on angels' hearts engraved appear ;
Jesus Himself, in unknown form, drew near,
And, listening to their accents sad and low,
While, from their eyes fell many a bitter tear,
Said : Have the kindness, friends, to let me know
What are those dire events which cause your tears to flow.

XII.

Then one of them, named Cleopas, surprised
That facts so wonderful should be unknown,
Replied : Art thou, indeed, so ill advised,
That, among countless thousands, thou alone
Hast never heard of deeds, so lately done
In our own neighbourhood ; deeds strange and new,
For which no tears or sighs can e'er atone ?
Publicly done, surely there must be few
That have not known them well ! Alas that they are true !

XIII.

The Saviour, being anxious to remove
Their mental darkness and their grief, which rose
From ignorance of Himself, resolved to prove
Their views of Him erroneous. Hence He chose
Not yet His real person to disclose,
Lest they their judgment should incline to yield
More to His word, which they would not oppose,
Than to the force of truth, which, when revealed,
Would, in the darkest hour, prove a protecting shield.

XIV.

Hence, with a view His object to obtain,
With look and tone of kindest sympathy,
He asked what deeds were those which gave them pain.
To which inquiry, with a heavy sigh,
Cleopas gave, in substance, this reply:
Of late, we had among us One, whose name
We cannot but regard with reverence high,
As well entitled to a prophet's fame,
By all, who knew His worth, loved with a quenchless flame !

XV.

Think it not strange that we deplore His loss
In sad bereavement, and lament His end ;
For never, since the world began, did cross
The mourner's path a kinder, better Friend ;
Or one more prompt his generous aid to lend,
To all who felt their need. and sought His face.
Not to the rich alone did He extend
His friendly succour, but to every case,
Without regard to rank, to person, or to place.

XVI.

With those who wept, He mingled His own tears ;
With those who sighed, He blended His own sighs ;
To those whose path was dark with boding fears,
He showed a glorious light beyond the skies ;
Those who rejoiced, saw in His kindling eyes
The rays of sympathetic joy, which told
That in His heart still higher joys would rise,
Were theirs increased, even to a thousand fold.
More precious were His gifts than gems, or heaps of gold.

XVII.

Knowing that human life is but a breath,
A spark, a flash, that kindles and expires,
He taught us to avoid the path of death ;
To keep in due subjection our desires ;
To shun the lake that burns with quenchless fires ;
To watch against temptation ; to implore
Aid from that potent arm that never tires ;
To obey and serve, to reverence and adore
Him who can save our souls, and bless us evermore.

XVIII.

He taught us to repent of every sin ;
To mourn, in hearty sorrow, for the wrong ;
To hate it utterly, and to begin
A new and nobler life ; to pray and long
For holiness of heart, to which belong
Bright promises of endless peace and rest ;
And, yet that mercy still must be our song
Of triumph and of hope ; that e'en the best
Could not acceptance gain, in their own goodness dressed.

XIX.

He loved to teach, enlighten, solace, bless,
The broken-hearted sinner ; to proclaim
Pardon to those who mourned, in deep distress,
Their utter guilt ; to kindle the pure flame
Of love divine, in hearts where sin and shame
Had long maintained their fierce and dreadful sway.
He neither slighted nor despised their name,
But sent them blest with peace and joy away,
And lightened of the load that on their bosoms lay.

XX.

Those rules of duty which His lips imposed,
Were but the dictates of His own pure mind ;
His acts, His words, His very looks disclosed
Nothing impure, deceptive, or unkind ;
But a fixed purpose, constantly inclined
To love the good, benevolent and right ;
All that He said and did, through life, combined
To form an image most intensely bright
Of what perfection loves, and views with sweet delight.

XXI.

His power was wonderful. No form of pain,
Disease, misfortune, impotence or woe,
Though oft assailed by other means in vain,
Could, to His might, the least resistance show.
Even fierce demons, from the world below,
Trembled with horror at His very name,
As premonition of sure overthrow ;
They bore unwilling homage to His fame,
And from His presence fled, o'erwhelmed with fear and shame.

XXII.

Nature herself durst not resist His word,
Or question His behest, but straight obeyed ;
As if she were His subject, He her Lord,
And all her works were by His fingers made,
Formed for His use, and bound to render aid
To those whom He would bless ; or overwhelm in woe
Those who His rights eternal would invade.
E'en the dread tyrant Death was made to know
'Twere well, when He required, to let his victims go.

XXIII.

Yet did He not this fearful power employ
For His own pleasure, reputation, gain,
To crush the poor and helpless, or destroy
His cruel and malignant foes, who fain
In His own guiltless blood their hands would stain.
His works were those of mercy. To explore
The abodes of sorrow, wretchedness and pain—
This was His aim. He dearly loved to pour,
Into the mourning heart, a joy unknown before.

XXIV.

Who would have thought that One so pure, so kind,
So full of deep compassion for all those
Involved in guilt and suffering, would find
His character assailed by cruel foes !
Yet such the fact. Our blinded rulers chose
To persecute Him, with relentless hate.
They sought for every pretext to oppose
All that He did, however good or great.
Nought but His precious blood their fell revenge could sate.

XXV.

O sir ! my burdened heart will not allow
My tongue to tell the scenes of dire disgrace
And pain, through which He passed ! Suffice it now
To state, they hurried Him from place to place ;
Derided Him ; spit in His blessed face ;
Robed Him in purple ; placed a thorny crown
Upon His brow, in mockery of His case.
And yet that brow was calm, and wore no frown,
While, from His temples pierced, blood-drops were trickling
down.

XXVI.

With heavy hand His tender flesh they scourged,
And then compelled Him, faint with loss of blood,
Onward to bear His ponderous cross ; till urged,
Beyond His strength, along the painful road
To Calvary, He sunk beneath its load !
At length they nailed Him to the fatal tree !
Yet, in His deepest agonies, He showed
A heart from vengeful wish entirely free ;
And pardon sought from God for all their cruelty.

XXVII.

It was a piteous sight, to see Him placed
Between two malefactors ; as if He,
Thus scorned and hated, tortured and disgraced,
Were the most vile and guilty of the three !
Who, without tears, this suffering One could see !
Many did see Him on the cross, and weep ;
Many, once by His hand from woe set free,
Constrained by cruel foes far off to keep,
Beheld, and sought in tears their nameless grief to steep.

XXVIII.

Not so with those who had contrived His death.

They for their victim had no tears to shed.

Their hate pursued Him till His latest breath.

They railed in scorn, and proudly wagged the head,

Until the moment when His spirit fled,

And 'scaped for ever from their direful rage.

Thus, on a cross, this wondrous Prophet bled,

Despised, although the glory of our age.

His like is sought in vain, on history's ample page.

XXIX.

Well may we give indulgence to our grief,

In view of what so lately has occurred ;

For we had entertained the fond belief

That He, to whom our Scriptures have referred

In various prophecies, so often heard,

Had come ; that our Messiah stood revealed

In Him 'gainst whom such hatred deep was stirred,

Prepared for conquest wide to take the field,

Till all His foes should fall, or in submission yield !

XXX.

Long has our nation groaned beneath the sway

Of proud, imperious Rome. Long has she pined

In servitude, and panted for the day

When her beloved Messiah should unbind

Her galling chains, and leave her unconfined.

We fondly hoped that day would soon appear ;

Such was our Prophet's power, we felt inclined

To think the time of our redemption near ;

But O! the scourge, the cross, the lacerating spear!—

XXXI.

These have belied our hopes ! Jesus is slain !
Could the Messiah die ! lie in the grave !
Could He submit to death who was to reign
O'er Jacob's house for ever, strong to save !
He, whose victorious banner was to wave
Over the subject earth, in every clime !
Who in the blood of foes His feet should lave !
How could a Being thus august, sublime,
Be treated as a slave ! die for pretended crime !

XXXII.

Since He was laid within the silent tomb,
Two days have passed away ; 'tis now the third ;
Never were witnessed days of deeper gloom ;
Our hopes, our joys, with Him were all interred !
O ! strange, indeed, the events that have occurred !
What mind can comprehend them, or explain ?
And, what seems most surprising and absurd,
Women, who early sought His grave, maintain
That angels, whom they saw, declared Him risen again !

XXXIII.

Could we believe their declaration true ;
Could we believe that He, whose blessed head
Was bowed so low, had risen to life anew ;
What joy, what thrilling rapture would be shed
In wretched hearts, where Joy herself is dead !
O that we could believe 'twere even so !
But no ! it cannot be ! All hope is fled !
Nothing remains but darkness, grief and woe ;
Flow then, ye gushing tears, and never cease to flow !

XXXIV.

Thus, Cleopas ; to whom, in accents kind,
Forcible, touching, yet devoid of art,
The listening Stranger thus expressed his mind :
Alas ! that biassed feelings should impart
Such unbelief and blindness to the heart !
How much ye misconceive those lucid views
The prophets have unfolded ! Ye would start,
Greatly alarmed, to think ye could refuse
Assent to them ; and yet, their meaning ye abuse !

XXXV.

How different the Messiah they disclose
From that which your perverted minds conceive !
You think of Him as crushing all His foes,
And destined, as a conqueror, to achieve
The liberation of our tribes, who grieve
Beneath the pressure of a foreign sway.
He is a conqueror. This you may believe.
And yet He conquers in a different way
From that pursued by those who worldly power display.

XXXVI.

Man is oppressed, by far more deadly foes
Than those who seek by violence to destroy
His temporal interests. He that overthrows
These potent enemies ; that can employ
Due means to crush them ; He may well enjoy
The name of conqueror ! Is man allied
To dust ? Is he a momentary toy
For Death to play with, and then lay aside ?
Yes, 'tis a solemn truth he seeks in vain to hide !

XXXVII.

Yet, in his crumbling tenement of clay
A spirit dwells, that will survive the sun ;
Cycles on cycles vast may roll away,
And leave its bliss or woe but just begun !
And yet, with all its powers, it is undone,
Perverted, maddened, blinded, ruined, lost !
What generous friend to its relief shall run,
And hold successful combat with the host
Of nameless, subtle foes, that o'er its ruin boast ?

XXXVIII.

Who shall deliver it from envy, pride,
Avarice, ambition, lust, deceit and fraud ;
From all the foes that now in secret hide,
And now emboldened rise and stalk abroad ;
Foes to its inward peace, and foes to God ?
Bound by their chains, where shall this spirit go,
When death shall strip it of its cumbering clod,
And sunder it from all its hopes below ?
Must it not be the prey of everlasting woe !

XXXIX.

He that can crush these foes with arm of might,
And rescue deathless spirits from their sway,
Has to the name of Conqueror nobler right
Than he whose will more numerous slaves obey
Than ever felt the light and warmth of day !
Was Jesus such a Conqueror as this ?
Did He His power o'er sin and death display ?
Messiah's glories, then, are surely His !
No victories like those which end in perfect bliss !

XL.

What were those prisons massive, dark and deep,
Whose doors, unlocked by our Messiah's might,
Were to give up their victims, free to leap
From sundered chains to liberty and light ?
Were they those dens of artificial night,
Composed of iron gates and walls of stone,
In which frail bodies, buried from the sight
Of friends and kindred, pine and weep alone ?
No ! they were prisons in which immortal spirits groan !

XLI.

Sin builds her prisons fraught with gloomy cells,
To hold in bondage souls that never die.
Each guilty act is but a stone that tells
In their construction ; serves to raise on high
Those walls o'er which e'en angels cannot fly.
Her prisoners besotted love their chains ;
Left to themselves, they do not even try
To 'scape her thralldom. O ! the dreadful pains
Reserved for those o'er whom her empire she maintains !

XLII.

Did He whose treatment ye so much deplore,
Assail these dread receptacles of woe,
Unbar their gates, their dreary cells explore,
Unbind their fettered slaves, and let them go ?
Such power and grace as this did Jesus show ?
Then, as Messiah, do not doubt His claim !
What greater, better boon could He bestow,
Than freedom to the soul from sin and shame ?
This is the only freedom worthy of the name !

XLIII.

To those who deeply mourn and often weep,
Was the Messiah comfort to impart?
Mourn! weep! For what? Even those who cannot keep
Those fleeting idols which beguile the heart,
Often with grief and desperation start,
When stript of wealth, distinction, pleasure, friends.
Comfort to these! No! Such as learn the art
To grieve o'er all that injures or offends;
Comfort to these alone the great Messiah sends!

XLIV.

What objects meet the real mourner's wants,
And give him ample cause to wipe his tears?
Those for which pride, or lust, or avarice pants?
Or those that will survive time's fleeting years?
Shall temporal good absorb our hopes and fears?
What is the value of that bliss, or woe,
That like the meteor glares and disappears?
Bliss coming from above, or from below,
Does the Messiah then on mourning hearts bestow?

XLV.

Did He, who on the dreadful cross was slain,
Dry up those tears for sin and folly shed;
Cleansing of sin itself the woful stain,
And kindly pouring on the drooping head
The oil of joy; saying to those who fled
To Him for pardon: Go, and sin no more?
Then through our nation let His name be spread;
Ye have no need still further to explore
His well established claims. Believe, obey, adore!

XLVI.

But Jesus was despised, rejected, scorned,
Arraigned, condemned, scourged, crucified, interred !
If with Messiah's attributes adorned,
Could ills so dire as these have been incurred ?
Howe'er mysterious, think it not absurd
That He should be reviled, and bleed and die.
Consider what ye oft have read and heard ;
Consult the oracles of prophecy ;
By Truth's unerring standard all your judgments try.

XLVII.

Whom had the ancient prophet in his eye,
In this sublime description ? He shall grow,
Like root, or tender plant, in soil that's dry,
And, to our minds shall no attractions show.
E'en when His presence we shall see and know,
No form, no comeliness shall we behold
To waken in our hearts affection's glow.
Although His excellence can ne'er be told,
To all His peerless charms our feelings shall be cold !

XLVIII.

Of men he is despised, rejected, spurned,
A man of sorrows and to grief allied ;
For all His love no kindness is returned ;
From One so slighted all their faces hide.
Yet, for our sakes, these dreadful woes betide
The Sufferer magnanimous and kind ;
For us He is reproached, for us decried ;
Our guilt and miseries touch His generous mind ;
To bear our griefs and woes He leaves all else behind.

XLIX.

So great His sorrows ; such the crushing load
Of grief and anguish on His spirit laid ;
He seems to be forsaken of His God,
Smitten, afflicted, stricken, a victim made
To Justice ; covered with the dreadful shade
Of wrath divine ; wrapped in Jehovah's frown !
God from his soul withdraws His wonted aid !
O ! why thus wounded, bruised, chastised, crushed down ?
'Twas for our grievous sins He suffered ; not His own !

L.

We had transgressed against the laws of God,
And merited correction most severe ;
On Him descended the chastising rod,
That He whom we had injured might appear
Our Father reconciled, and calm our fear.
All we, like foolish sheep, had gone astray,
Wandering in wilds that furnished nought to cheer ;
Destitute, friendless, having lost our way ;
Jehovah did on Him our sins and follies lay.

LI.

Yet, when oppressed, afflicted beyond thought,
With wondrous patience not a word he spake.
And, as a harmless lamb to slaughter brought,
Against the knife does no resistance make ;
Or, as a sheep, when seized by those who take
Her fleecy robe, yields to their harsh restraint ;
So He, when treated roughly for our sake,
Though, 'neath the load of suffering, sick and faint,
Meekly and calmly bore it all without complaint !

LII.

Others, though guilty, when accused of crime,
Were kept in prison till the appointed day
Of trial, to allow them ample time,
By evidence collected, to display
Their case in fairest light, and do away
Impressions false which would impede their right;
But He, though innocent, without delay
Was hurried to a judge, before whose sight
The sacred forms of law were all a mockery quite.

LIII.

None were permitted there His cause to plead,
His birth, His character, His life to show;
His foes from all regard for justice freed,
Hastened to inflict at once the dreadful blow
Which laid in death their guiltless victim low.
It pleased Jehovah to permit them thus,
By lawless power, to cause His blood to flow;
Because on Him was laid the direful curse,
Which, for our guilty deeds, was merited by us!

LIV.

To render infamous His glorious name,
With malefactors He was doomed to die.
His foes designed that in the grave of shame
With these same malefactors He should lie;
Yet, such was not the will of God most high.
Their farther rage He purposed to restrain,
And not forget the apple of His eye,
His well-beloved, who was free from stain;
Hence, in a rich man's tomb was placed His body slain.

LV.

Thus 'twas the pleasure of the Holy One
To bruise Him, fill His soul with sore distress,
That for our crimson guilt He might atone,
And purchase for us peace and righteousness;
Nor shall His death, which was designed to bless,
The lost and perishing, be found in vain.
He shall behold His seed, who shall confess
Their love for Him who for their sins was slain;
And ages without end shall still prolong His reign.

LVI.

Invested with dominion, clothed with might,
The universe shall own His sovereign sway.
His Father shall be filled with deep delight,
While He beholds His foes, subdued, obey
The rule of Him who bore their sins away.
Then shall those direful pains that whelmed His soul
Meet a sublime reward. He shall survey
The bliss of those who own His sweet control,
With still increasing joy, while ceaseless ages roll.

LVII.

Because He meekly bore reproach and pain;
Submitted to be numbered with the base
And infamous; was willing to be slain,
To purchase for the guilty pardoning grace
And sanctifying love; pitying their case,
And interceding e'en with bitter tears
For those who sought to whelm Him in disgrace;
His glory shall endure to endless years;
No portion, for such love too rich or great appears!

LVIII.

Thus speaks the prophet. Whom does he portray ?

Surely, not one of merely human race !

A character like this who can display,

Except the One who, full of truth and grace,

Is the bright image of His Father's face ?

Did He, whom ye assert our Rulers slew,

Most plainly answer to the prophet's case,

And realize the picture which he drew ?

If so, Messiah's name is certainly His due !

LIX.

Ye say that Jesus publicly displayed

Works which Almighty Power alone can claim ;

That devils from His presence shrunk afraid ;

That nothing could resist His potent name ;

That all His deeds were—not for wealth, or fame,
Or pleasure, but were solely for the good

Of sinners whelmed in suffering and shame.

How, then, had He on the defensive stood,

Could all the powers of earth prevail to shed His blood ?

LX.

Could He, whose potent voice controlled the waves,

And hushed the winds, and demons filled with dread,

And, reaching bodies mouldering in their graves,

Waked them, and brought them from their lowly bed ;—

Could He have wanted means to crush the head
Of every daring and insulting foe,

That longed and sought His precious blood to shed ?

The voice of reason plainly answers, No !

And yet, He suffered, died ! What do these facts then show ?

LXI.

They show most clearly that He chose to die ;
That death was the result of His own will ;
That 'twas endured to gain some object high ;
Some grand and glorious purpose to fulfil.
To ascertain that purpose, needs no skill ;
It only needs a meek, unbiassed mind,
A heart prepared with grateful love to thrill,
And melting penitence and joy, to find
A God, not only just, but merciful and kind.

LXII.

Ask ye the purpose grand for which he died ?
Search your own hearts ; see what is dwelling there !
Are there no wrong desires, no envy, pride,
No guilty lusts that oft the soul ensnare,
No sins that whisper anguish and despair ?
If God against those sins do not display
His just resentment, what shall then repair
His injured law ? But if He do, what ray
Of hope remains to you, so prone to disobey ?

LXIII.

You, then, must suffer for the injury done
To Him whose law is death for each offence ;
Or else, some other being must atone
For all your guilt ; while you, at His expense,
His expiatory death, enjoy the sense
Of pardoning mercy and redeeming grace.
Justice must not be injured, wronged ; and hence,
Yours were, indeed, a sad and hopeless case,
Unless some generous friend will suffer in your place.

LXIV.

But He who makes atonement for your guilt,
Of course must be Himself entirely pure ;
Else for Himself His blood were justly spilt.
What benefit to others could inure
From that which, e'en if shed, could not procure
Pardon and peace for Him whose blood was shed ?
But Scripture, reason, conscience, make it sure,
That no mere man is sinless. Man is dead
In trespasses and sins : wrath thunders o'er his head.

LXV.

But if a sinless victim were obtained,
Disposed to make atonement for His race,
Were He mere man, no object could be gained,
Adapted in the least to meet the case.
How could his sufferings merit pardoning grace,
For sins more numerous than the ocean sands,
And in God's government supply the place
Of strict obedience to those high commands,
On which, as on their base, His boundless empire stands ?

LXVI.

He must, indeed, be man. He must possess
Capacity to suffer. It were right
That expiatory suffering should press
Upon that very nature whose delight
Has been to indulge rebellion, in the sight
Of Heaven's Almighty and Eternal King ;
Yet something more than man must bear the might
Of wrath divine, of guilt extract the sting,
And on the Altar lay a priceless offering !

LXVII.

On what atonement less than infinite
In moral worth, shall countless myriads dare
To trust for pardon for those sins, whose height
And depth are measureless ? And where,
(To furnish hope of refuge from despair,)
Shall either Heaven or earth a victim find,
Whose blood shall every injury repair,
While God shall show Himself immensely kind
And merciful, to rebels ruined, wretched, blind !

LXVIII.

What saith the prophet ? Unto us is born
A child, and unto us is given a son,
Whose person glories infinite adorn ;
Whose titles speak the attributes of One
Possessed of an existence not begun,
But from eternity, and ne'er to cease ;
The mighty God, filling a regal throne,
The Eternal Father, and the Prince of Peace,
Whose never-ending sway shall constantly increase.

LXIX.

What have we here ? One that is born ; a man ;
Of nature that could suffer, bleed and die,
In strict conformity with mercy's plan ;
And yet a God of glorious majesty,
Of nature that could give a value high
To all this suffering. Here is One, indeed,
Who, if He look on man with pitying eye,
And for his welfare will consent to bleed,
Can expiate His guilt, and meet his pressing need.

LXX.

What say ye, then, of Him, whose tragic death,
So strange, so cruel, ye lament and weep ?
Almighty, could a whisper of His breath
Wrap in the stillness of an infant's sleep
The sea, when o'er its waves the tempests sweep ?
Omniscient, could His calm and piercing eye
See thoughts that wicked men desire to keep
Close locked from others ? Was He the Most High ?
And was He also man, willing to bleed and die ?

LXXI.

Was He beyond example loving, kind,
And full of pity for the sons of woe ?
This ye aver. Might He not be inclined
E'en death with all its pains to undergo,
That pity in its heights and depths to show,
And thus throw open wide the gates of bliss
To those exposed to endless death below ?
What though ye would not die for enemies ?
His love might fully equal such a case as this !

LXXII.

Doubt not ! For such a purpose He *did die* !
What glory will for ever crown His name !
When, seated on His throne, He bends His eye
On happy myriads saved from sin and shame,
And glowing with devotion's deathless flame,
What joy will fill that heart whose blood was shed !
How will the ransomed hail Him with acclaim !
What honours will they heap upon the head
Of Him who suffered scorn, and agonized and bled !

LXXIII.

Would ye to all the prophets give the lie ?
Would ye deprive Messiah of His crown ?
Would ye prevent the God who reigns on high
From sending streams of pardoning mercy down,
On those who have deserved His withering frown ?
He seeks to bid earth's moral desert bloom,
And flourish thick with plants of high renown !
Would ye enshroud it in a deeper gloom,
And all its hopes consign to an eternal tomb ?

LXXIV.

Thus spake the Stranger, and much more He spake,
In terms more lucid far than here conveyed ;
Unfolding truth, adapted well to slake
Their thirsting spirits. While He thus portrayed
Redeeming love, removing every shade
That hid its glories from their darkened mind,
Absorbed, all other thoughts aside they laid :
They thought alone of Jesus, glorious, kind !
And wept, and wondered much that they had been so
blind !

LXXV.

Now His whole life, His labours, toils, and tears,
And nameless sorrows, flash upon their sight.
The painful scenes of many bitter years
Seem clad in glory most divinely bright,
And waken mingled sadness and delight ;
Sadness, that One so lovely, good and great,
Should meet from wicked men such rage and spite ;
Delight, that death itself had oped the gate
To joys which none but God can fathom or create !

LXXVI.

Long since in glory, his meridian height
The sun had passed, and, verging toward the west,
Now warned the travellers of approaching night;
Yet they had listened with so keen a zest
To what the Stranger kindly had expressed,
Had been so charmed with what His lips conveyed,
So wrapped in thought, and so divinely blest,
That whether they had hastened or delayed,
While journeying on their way memory no record made.

LXXVII.

At length, arriving near their own abode,
In which they had expected to remain,
Seeing the Stranger still pursue the road,
The thought of separation wakened pain;
And hence they were determined to constrain
Their friend to tarry, that His converse sweet,
Concerning Him who for their sins was slain,
Might cheer them still. He yields, disposed to meet
Requests so warmly urged, which often they repeat.

LXXVIII.

Soon is the table spread with frugal fare
Round which they're seated with their welcome guest,
Who, much to their surprise, assumes the air
And manner, not of one who has been pressed
To abide with them for temporary rest;
As master at the table He presides;
He takes the bread, which, after He has blessed,
He breaks deliberately, and then divides:
And now the veil no more His glorious presence hides.

LXXIX.

O ! it is He who suffered on the cross !

They see Him now alive ! They know Him well !

The more intensely they had mourned His loss,

The higher now the waves of rapture swell !

The depth of their emotions who can tell ?

They gaze with mingled wonder and delight,

As if enchantment wrapped them in her spell.

But, O how transient is the pleasing sight !

He whom they love is gone, like meteor of the night !

LXXX.

Instantly, each to each they loud exclaim :

Surely no cause is furnished for surprise,

Although we knew not at the time His name,

That when He clearly placed before our eyes]

The meaning of those wondrous prophecies,

Designed Messiah's glories to display,

A burning love should in our hearts arise !

Who else, but Christ Himself, could thus portray

Truths that enchain the soul, and charm its griefs away ?

LXXXI.

Scarcely they wait the broken bread to taste,

So anxious do they feel the news to tell.

Back to the city they return in haste,

That other kindred hearts with theirs may swell.

To learn that He, who conquered Death and Hell,

Now lives and reigns, their own Almighty Friend,

And will most surely order all things well ;

Wide o'er the earth His power and love extend,

And bring a ransomed world beneath His sway to bend.

LXXXII.

Arrived, they found convened at twilight hour,
 Thomas excepted, all the chosen few,
 With many friends besides, whose hearts the power
 And love of Christ by sweet experience knew.
 Instant, they all exclaimed: Indeed 'tis true,
 That He for whom so oft our tears we shed,
 Whom on a cross our cruel rulers slew,
 Has risen a glorious Conqueror from the dead!
 He lives! He lives! He reigns! Morn breaks! The night
 has fled!

LXXXIII.

Peter has seen Him: worshipped at His feet;
 Heard His own voice; yes, heard Him oft proclaim
 His kind regard for us! Soon will he meet
 And gladden all those hearts that love His name!
 The two disciples now confirm the same;
 Tell of His converse with them by the way;
 Tell how their love was kindled to a flame,
 To hear Him, though unknown, those truths display
 Which on the darkest scenes diffused meridian day.

LXXXIV.

But while with joyful hearts they thus declare,
 To those who listen with intense delight,
 Facts that removed their load of grief and care,—
 As if the sun, beaming with lustre bright,
 Should suddenly dispel the shades of night,
 Converting darkness into instant day,
 The glorious Saviour stands revealed to sight.
 How strange, how unexpected the display!
 No wonder that it seems to take their sense away!

LXXXV.

Majestic, calm and sweet, His smile appears,
While He accords the salutation, Peace !
And yet their hearts are filled with chilling fears ;
They think it is a spirit. To release
Their minds from dread, which seems but to increase,
Again He says, in tones which, who could hear
And find not, though alarmed, his terror cease ?
Why are ye troubled ? Why do thoughts of fear
Disturb your trembling hearts to see your Lord appear ?

LXXXVI.

Behold my hands and feet ! Their scars will tell
Whether their owner on a cross was slain !
By sight and touch, search and examine well.
Your senses were bestowed to ascertain
Material objects. Were they given in vain,
Or, what is worse, with purpose to deceive ?
That spirit hath not flesh and bones, is plain ;
These I possess, as you yourselves perceive !
How very clear the case ! How can you disbelieve ?

LXXXVII.

If, by your senses, you cannot be sure
That I am what I now appear to be,
What evidence at all can you procure,
To prove that all the objects which you see
And handle, are not merest phantasy ?
What ! Are the vales, the hills, the clouds, the skies,
The sun that lights yon azure canopy,
The stars, that seem like angels' beaming eyes,
Deceptive visions all, or spirits in disguise ?

LXXXVIII.

What! Rob the Eternal of the light He flings
From flaming worlds created by His word!
Say, when creation in loud chorus sings
His lofty praise, no voice or note is heard!
Hush all this music, silence every chord!
Say, when ye see the heavens, they are not there
Bright to reflect the glory of their Lord!
Say, when the teeming earth reveals His care,
No earth exists whose waste He visits to repair!

LXXXIX.

What! Is your own existence all a dream,
Or limited to each separate consciousness?
And, when you see the smile of friendship gleam
Or witness indications of distress,
Revealing hearts which grief and woe oppress,
Are these the merest phantoms of the mind?
Have ye no friends whom ye would wish to bless?
No neighbours who can share your labours kind?
And do ye search in vain God's universe to find?

XC.

What are the means by which ye are assured
That One, called Jesus, lived on earth for years,
Labour and toil and want and woe endured,
And met a death which waked your bitter tears?
What but your sense of touch, your eyes and ears?
These are the very means you now possess
To show you that alive He reappears.
Either He lives or never came to bless
A world involved by sin in guilt and wretchedness!

XCI.

Doubt not your senses, then ! Do not deprive
The world, for whose salvation I have died,
Of all the blessedness they should derive
From the rich gifts I suffered to provide !
You I have chosen to make known, not hide
The fact that I have risen from the dead
To fling the gates of peace and mercy wide !
Vainly, indeed, my blood were freely shed,
Unless this glorious fact wide through the world be spread !

XCII.

Thus having spoken, all their doubts to quell,
And give them satisfaction full, complete,
And fitted all illusion to dispel,
He kindly showed them both His hands and feet.
These they examined, and with transport sweet
Gazed on those scars the piercing nails had made ;
Often disposed with interest to repeat
The rigid scrutiny, as if afraid
He were not human flesh, but unsubstantial shade !

XCIII.

Joy blended with astonishment intense,
So filled their hearts, so wrapped their every thought,
They scarcely knew whether the world of sense
Were still their home, or whether they were caught
To higher sphere, where things of sense are not.
Then, said the Saviour, Have ye any meat ?
Broiled fish and honey-comb were instant brought,
Which in His usual manner then He eat,
To show 'twas He Himself, not some fantastic cheat.

XCIV.

O! wondrous condescension, tender care,
For those whose minds, long wrapped in sorrow's night,
And shadowed by the wing of fell despair,
Could scarce endure the radiance of the light,
When their loved Master burst upon their sight!
How kind, the same familiar acts to show
Which they had often witnessed with delight,
And which, repeated, they must surely know!
How brightly must the past on memory's tablet glow!

XCV.

Now all seems real, life-like! It is He!
It is their Master, risen from the dead!
The very same who once, in Galilee,
From place to place His humble followers led,
And round His path of self-denial shed
A light more glorious than the noon-day sun;
Feeding the hungry soul with heavenly bread;
Blessing the needy, helpless and undone,
And never knowing rest from works of love begun!

XCVI.

Those melting eyes, that calm, majestic brow,
Those lips of wisdom and those accents sweet,
That form, that look, are all familiar now!
Delighted their loved Lord once more to greet,
They bow in willing homage at His feet,
And while they bathe them with their joyful tears,
In rapturous strains His glorious name repeat.
Forgetting all their former griefs and fears,
The bliss they now enjoy rewards the toils of years!

XCVII.

Soon as the exciting rapture and surprise
That filled and whelmed their souls had passed away,
Their Lord, with kindness beaming in His eyes,
And in His usual, condescending way,
To enlarge their views proceeded thus to say :
Why such astonishment that I should die,
And from the dead appear to you this day ?
Did I not tell you that the hour was nigh,
Which sorely all your faith and love and zeal would try ?

XCVIII.

Do ye not well remember, that before
The events themselves occurred I told you all,
In language which the plainest import bore,
That dire events your Master would befall ?
That He would be betrayed and held in thrall ?
Scourged, mocked, derided, crucified and slain ?
Laid in the grave and shrouded in death's pall,
Till the third day, when He would rise again ?
How could these clear predictions all prove vain ?

XCIX.

Were they not founded on that written word
Of old, revealed from Heaven by men inspired ?
Must not the events predicted have occurred ?
And will they not for ever be admired ?
What is so ardently to be desired
As remedy in full for human guilt ?
And yet, unless deep love my heart had fired,—
Unless my blood had on the cross been spilt,
On what a crumbling base were hope of pardon built !

C.

The very object which I had in view,
In first selecting you to follow me,
Was, that as witnesses, firm, faithful, true,
Ye might proclaim all ye should hear and see,
To all the tribes of men, where'er they be.
'Twas that ye might make known in every clime
Salvation costing blood, but offered free;
To penitents a full release from crime;
Good news to sinful men, through all the lapse of time!

CI.

Thus spoke the Saviour, and in language clear
At greater length proceeded to unfold,
While His disciples lent a ravished ear,
That plan which never fully can be told
By other lips than His. No heart was cold,
No eye was dim, while with a master's hand
Breaking the seals, that record He unrolled
Which gives a prospect of a better land—
A hope to cheer the soul long as God's Throne shall stand.

CII.

Upon their understandings dark, perplexed,
And full of hurtful prejudice, He poured
Such light that they could comprehend the text
Of prophecy, which they had oft explored
Almost in vain. 'Twas like a miser's hoard
To them before, kept not for use but show;
Now, of this mine, which can such wealth afford,
The priceless value they begin to know.
Full in their ravished sight its peerless riches glow.

CIII.

As traveller just emerging from the shade
Of forest dense that bars the prospect wide,
Catches some glorious sight at once displayed,
More to the scenes of Heaven than earth allied—
Some grand abode of royalty or pride,
With gilded dome high towering to the skies,
Circled by beauties rare on every side,
Fields, gardens, arbours that enchant the eyes—
And gazes on the scene transported with surprise;

CIV.

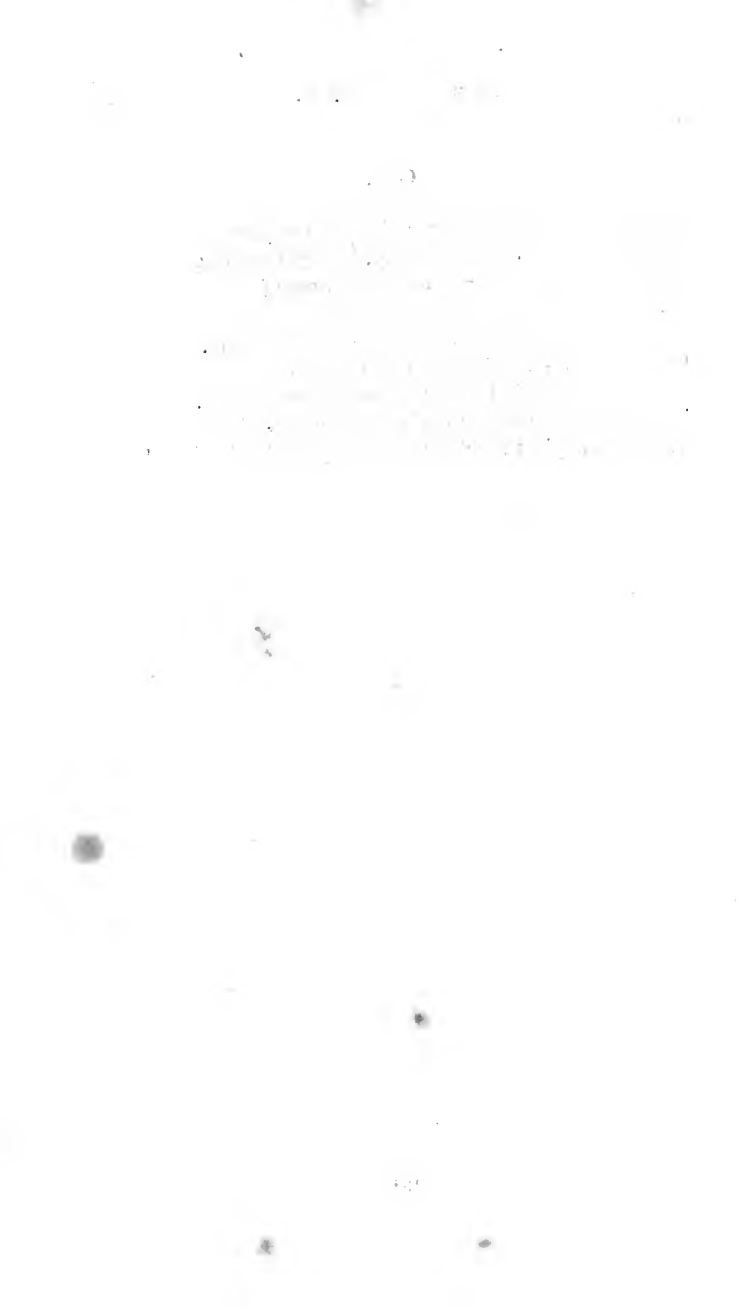
So the disciples, 'scaping from the maze
Of prejudice and error, seize the sight
Of temple grand, formed for Jehovah's praise,
Whose polished stones gleam with unearthly light;
Each one a precious gem intensely bright;
Each one a living stone, a deathless soul
Gathered from rubbish buried deep in night.
They see, with rapture which they scarce control,
Power, Wisdom, Grace divine, the basis of the whole.

CV.

The Builder of this structure stands revealed
In Him of Nazareth, their Incarnate God,
Whose glory from their view so long concealed,
Now, with meridian lustre, shines abroad.
He purchased its materials with His blood,
And shaped and polished them with nicest care.
They long to call on angels, to applaud
Him who could leave a world for ever fair,
And toil, and bleed, and die, our ruin to repair!

CVI.

Thus close the great transactions of the day
On which the Saviour, rising, brought to light
Immortal joys, and scattered night away ;
Day ever memorable in the sight
Of God, of ransomed spirits clothed in white ;
Of all the angelic choristers of Heaven,
Who worship in God's temple, day and night ;
The loveliest, sweetest day of all the seven !
Who can neglect its claims, and hope to be forgiven !



CANTO VIII.

THE SKEPTIC AND THE TEST OF LOVE.



CANTO VIII.

THE SKEPTIC AND THE TEST OF LOVE.

ANALYSIS.

Apostrophe to Love.—Evening of the eighth day after the resurrection.—The time suited to meditation, to self-examination, to secret and social prayer.—The disciples assembled for religious worship.—Thomas present.—The Saviour suddenly appears in their midst.—His interview with Thomas.—Unreasonableness and folly of skepticism.—The disciples withdraw into Galilee.—The Saviour appears to several of them at the Sea of Tiberias.—His interview with Peter.—Love tested by its fruits.—True and false zeal characterized and distinguished.—Mount Tabor, in Galilee, designated as the place of general meeting for all the followers of the Saviour.



LOVE.

NOBLEST of all the virtues that invest
Beings possessed of reason, conscience, will !
How shall thy glorious beauty be expressed ?
What terms our ardent wishes shall fulfill ?
Even He, who reigns upon the Sacred Hill,
When our cold hearts he sweetly would incline,
With warm affection toward Himself to thrill,
Assumes, O Love ! no other name than thine ;
Hence, thou art underived, eternal and divine !

When thou dost walk the earth with look serene,
Official Nature strews beneath thy feet,
In homage to thy sway, her carpet green,

Spangled with choicest flowers thy smile to greet,
And bids her thousand warblers all repeat
Their sweetest notes symphonious to thy praise.
Or, sitt'st thou throned upon thy regal seat?
Prompt at thy feet her golden stores she lays,—
All that the Spring unfolds, or Autumn's wealth displays.

She offers them to thee as all thine own,
As gifts bestowed by thy own liberal hand;
Hails thee as queen exalted on the throne
Of goodness infinite, while round thee stand
Millions subservient to thy high command,
Whose pleasure is to execute thy will,
And scatter joy profusely o'er the land.
The clouds, the rains, the dews, do but fulfill
Thy kind behest, and cause hearts with delight to thrill.

The sunbeams gather all their warmth and light
From thy sweet smile. The pure, resplendent dews
Borrow their radiance from thine eyelids bright.
The fragrance that the vernal gales diffuse
Is but thy breath. The feathered songsters use
Thy own soft notes to tell us they are blest.
Who can the volume bright of Heaven peruse,
And not behold, on every page, imprint
Thy name? Unnumbered worlds obey thy high behest!

That brighter, better world which Faith displays,
Without thy presence were a dreary scene
Devoid of all attraction. All its lays
Of joy were hushed. Its howers of fadeless green
Were withered quite. Its pure celestial sheen
Were changed to utter darkness and despair.
Its worshippers no real bliss could glean
From all its objects so divinely fair.
Polluted were its founts, and poisoned were its air.

O! with what lustre didst thou once appear,
 In human form, to save us from the woe
 Incurred by sin! What trophies didst thou rear
 To thy victorious might! Thou didst o'erthrow
 E'en death itself, and freely didst bestow
 Immortal gifts, the purchase of thy blood,
 On those who else nor peace nor joy could know.
 Yes, from thy heart did flow soft pity's flood,
 That rebels might obtain the friendship of their God!

I.

Seven days have passed, since the delightful morn
 Which saw Messiah's conquest, and revealed
 Life to the dead and hope to the forlorn,
 And Heaven's rich legacy of love unsealed.
 Long since, the shout of victory has pealed
 Through the vast universe, and startled Hell;
 Causing, in rebel hearts that will not yield,
 Love and submission, grief and fear to swell;
 Waking, among the blest, joys which no tongue can tell.

II.

Now the eighth day is hastening to a close.
 Beaming in splendour near the western main,
 The sun still lingers, and around him throws
 His mild, benignant rays; as though he fain
 Would measure back his glorious path again,
 And still prolong a day so passing fair,
 And cannot close it but with conscious pain.
 No vapours load, no clouds obscure the air,
 Save those which round the sun in golden robes repair.

III.

Can empty clouds such brilliant glories fling
Athwart the sky? Or are they pages dressed
In gorgeous purple, crowding round their king,
Prompt to attend him to his evening rest!
Are they not, rather, spirits pure and blest,
Clad in such robes as Heaven alone displays,
Come from a higher sphere, by Heaven's behest,
To blend their glories with the parting rays
Of this, the Christian Sabbath, holiest of days?

IV.

Soft as the dew, now twilight comes, and throws
O'er Nature's sober face her veil of grey,
As if to woo her to a sweet repose
From all the cares and tumults of the day.
So, kind and tender mothers oft essay
To lull their infant charge to gentle sleep,
By veiling from their eyes the dazzling ray
Of sun or lamp, and constant vigils keep
O'er their sweet slumbering babes, lest they should wake
and weep.

V.

'Tis meditation's hour. The stars that shine
Fixed and unchanging in the azure sky,
Seem like a thousand piercing eyes divine,
Gazing upon us from their station high,
To notice whither all our wishes fly;
Whether they hover o'er the scenes of time,
Or soar towards Him who fills eternity;
Whether our hopes dwell in Heaven's blissful clime,
Or centre in a world of sorrow, death and crime.

VI.

The breathing zephyrs whisper to the soul,
 In every leaf that moves with rustling sound,
 There is a Spirit, whose sublime control
 Pervades the heights above, the depths profound,
 And all the worlds that float in space around,
 Uncaused, eternal, merciful and pure ;
 Whose nature angel minds can never sound ;
 Whose laws are just, whose promises are sure ;
 Whose smile alone can give joys ever to endure.

VII.

The Nightingale, whose notes of love and joy
 Soothe and enchant the listening ear of night,
 Tells of a bliss that finds no sad alloy,—
 Of golden fruits no frost can ever blight,
 Of songs that give expression to delight
 Intense, unending, perfect, yet serene,
 Of hearts devoid of malice, rage and spite,
 Of glories human eyes have never seen,
 Of a sweet Paradise robed in eternal green.

VIII.

But most of all, each gentle, soothing sound
 That in soft accents falls upon the ear,
 Whispers and tells of Him whose love profound
 Called him away from Heaven's eternal sphere,
 To dwell a servant and an exile here ;
 To labour, toil and suffer, bleed and die,
 That those who drop the penitential tear,
 Pardoned and blest, might raise to Heaven their eye,
 And claim it as their home, and cease to grieve and sigh.

IX.

It is the hour that calls us to survey

With rigid scrutiny the changeless past,—
The feelings, motives, conduct of the day,
Those moral acts whose consequences vast
A cheering light, or gloomy shade will cast
On death and judgment and eternity.

O thou, possessed of powers destined to last
While God Himself shall fill His Throne on high,
In twilight's solemn hour fail not thy life to try!

X.

Be honest with thyself. The time is near

When earthly scenes will greet thine eyes no more ;
When pleasure, fashion, wealth will disappear ;
When all the tears that weeping friends can pour
Will not detain thee from that solemn shore
Which spreads a mighty ocean to thy sight,
That nothing but Omniscience can explore,—
An ocean fanned by gales of pure delight,
Or lashed by storms of wrath, and wrapt in endless night.

XI.

When thou art summoned to embark at last,
And spread thy sail for voyage ne'er to end,
What if at length the golden hour is past
In which thou couldst secure a powerful Friend,
Prompt at thy call His succour to extend,
And guide thee safely o'er the boundless main ?
What if, long slighted, he refuse to lend
His helping hand ? What if thou call in vain ?
Awake ! prepare betimes, nor brave eternal pain !

XII.

It is the hour of secret prayer. A veil
 Excludes the charms of Nature from our sight,
 That higher, holier objects may not fail
 To win our hearts, and fill them with delight.
 Now, He whose eye pierces the shades of night,
 Invites us to approach, and breathe our sighs
 And wants into His ear ; pledging His might
 And grace to help when storms of sorrow rise,
 And offering us His hand, to guide us to the skies.

XIII.

It is the hour of social prayer, of sweet
 And holy converse with the Saviour's friends,
 Who, drawn by cords of love, together meet,
 While listening Silence her kind influence lends,
 To make their joint requests to Him who sends
 His spirit to illumine, guide, sustain,
 And whisper tranquil joy that never ends ;
 To talk of Him who sunders every chain
 Of guilt and woe in hearts submissive to His reign.

XIV.

At this delightful hour of calm repose
 Fitted for holy converse with the skies,
 Met with closed doors for fear of angry foes,
 The pleased disciples greet each other's eyes.
 Now, they're assembled not to blend their sighs
 And sympathetic tears of deep distress,
 But to proclaim how high their joys arise,
 And worship Him, their Strength and Righteousness.
 They hope to meet His smile, their gladdened hearts to bless.

XV.

Thomas alone exhibits signs of grief,
Nor shares the joy that animates the rest—
Sad consequence of stubborn unbelief,
Which fills with sorrow hearts that might be blessed!—
When last they met, and Jesus stood confess'd
Before their sight, imparting joy profound,
By words of melting love to each addressed,
Among their number Thomas was not found ;
Hence, in his bleeding heart still lived a rankling wound.

XVI.

In vain they told him they had seen the Lord ;
In vain repeated all his language kind ;
He gave no hearty credence to their word ;
To clearest proof he seemed entirely blind,
Protesting he should never be inclined
To credit that his Lord had risen indeed,
Unless by sight and contact he should find,
In characters from all suspicion freed,
Prints of those very wounds which on the cross did bleed.

XVII.

Alas ! how little credit is his due !
His unbelief how void of all excuse !
What though the event supposed were strange and new ?
Do honest statements merit such abuse ?
Shall no assertions our belief induce
Which do not correspond with what we see
And know to accord with customary use ?
Then small must be our knowledge ! Who would be
The dupe of such absurd, blind incredulity ?

XVIII.

He who resides beneath a tropic sky,
 Has never seen the lakes congealed by cold.
 And does he furnish indications high
 Of great and powerful mind, to doubt, when told,
 By honest men by love of truth controlled,
 That, in some distant clime to him unknown,
 The lakes this wondrous property unfold?
 By doubts in such a case what would be shown?
 Why this—that they had knowledge greater than his own!

XIX.

The savage and the skeptic are alike
 At least in this, that neither can believe,
 Howe'er attested, that which does not strike
 His mind as probable. Each can receive
 What he can comprehend; but each would grieve
 To bow his lofty powers in homage low,
 To facts whose knowledge would his mind relieve
 From darkness palpable. Neither can know
 The happiness that truth, when welcomed, can bestow.

XX.

The former cannot comprehend at all
 What Newton, Arkwright, Davy have revealed;
 Nor would he view with consternation small,
 Secrets, by Franklin, Fulton, Morse, unsealed.
 To his contracted view the boundless field
 Of science is a blank, a thing of nought;
 Nor could he be induced assent to yield
 To evidence, to prove its wonders brought:
 Wise in his own conceit, while stinted thus in thought!

XXI.

The latter finds it hard to comprehend
What Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John have taught.
Both assume ground that candour can't defend ;
Both reject facts for which those proofs are brought,
Which doubt and fear can never set at nought ;
The testimony of plain, honest men,
Who never have in falsehood's wiles been caught.
They both appeal to reason's voice, and then
From her decision fly to error's gloomy den !

XXII.

This difference exists between the two,
That he who bears the tomahawk and bow,
By spurning that which science brings to view,
Evils less serious is doomed to know,
Than he who, seized with madness, dares to throw
Contempt on truths eternal and divine.
What if those worlds that far in ether glow,
Seem to the savage gems that brightly shine ?
What if he ne'er explored the wealth of Nature's mine ?

XXIII.

What if he live in ignorance of the might
That moves the steamboat, or the rattling car ?
What if the telegraph, with speed of light,
Bring him no joyful tidings from afar ?
Will ignorance of these great discoveries mar
Those savage sports where all his interest lies ?
His views from temporal good alone debar—
A good that never yet has met his eyes ;
They rob him not of joys eternal in the skies.

XXIV.

Not such the loss of him, who in his pride
 And stubborn incredulity shall spurn
 Those facts revealed from Heaven, which are allied
 To interests measureless, to hopes that burn
 In deathless spirits quickly to return
 To God their source, to meet His frown or smile.
 Does love divine over these spirits yearn?
 And shall a guilty worm that love revile?
 What shall avert its doom, caught in such deadly wile!

XXV.

Does Heaven reveal a Light to guide the lost
 Benighted traveller to a blissful home?
 What if our utmost efforts we exhaust
 To blight our moral vision? Shall we come
 Safe to this home at last? Or shall we roam
 For ever in the darkness of despair?
 What! Is our reason mad, our conscience dumb,
 Thus to despise Heaven's love and tender care?
 Beware of desperate steps! Immortal man, beware!

XXVI.

Doubts are not always proofs of views enlarged,
 Of knowledge vast, of wondrous tact and skill!
 Nor is the man with folly to be charged,
 Or superstition, or perverted will,
 Whose mind these clouds of darkness do not fill.
 Does he who questions that the earth is round,
 And thinks it flat, and always standing still,
 Demand our reverence for his skill profound?
 Where ignorance holds her sway, these gloomy doubts
 abound!

XXVII.

Where evidence is wanting, it is wise,
'Tis more, 'tis duty to withhold assent ;
But when full evidence before us lies,
To shut our eyes against it, with the intent
To counteract the end for which 'tis lent,
Is to pervert, to weaken, and debase
The very means of knowledge. He is bent
On his own utter ruin and disgrace,
Who tasks his moral powers in such a desperate case.

XXVIII.

Those plain and obvious statements that relate
Not to opinions, but to things of sense,
When made by men whose character and state
Preclude all motives that should give offence,
Demand belief without the least suspense.
But if these very statements should expose
Their authors to disgrace and loss immense,
Then to withhold assent, would but disclose
A mind averse to truth—one of its bitterest foes.

XXIX.

Judges and juries summoned to decide
On questions that involve the weal or woe
Of individuals, or regions wide—
While bound by solemn sanctions not to know
The face of man as either friend or foe,
And anxiously desirous not to miss
The path in which strict right has bade them go—
Have never asked for better proof than this !
Who can despise such proof and find the way to bliss !

XXX.

This is the proof Infinite Love has given
 Respecting plain and obvious events,
 Whose full belief involves the bliss of Heaven ;
 Contempt of which must be at the expense
 Of all the dictates of our common sense ;
 Nor can we a more certain knowledge gain
 Of any facts founded on evidence
 Derived from testimony full and plain.
 Rejecting this, we make all testimony vain.

XXXI.

What reason have we for the firm belief
 That London, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam,
 Victoria, John Ross the Indian chief,
 And Louis Philippe, are not all a sham ?
 Nothing but testimony, not a drachm
 Of evidence derived from actual sight.
 Of great discovery, of superior light ?
 Who doubts their being, merits he the palm
 Can he, thus, free the world from superstition's night ?

XXXII.

We must believe them not an empty dream
 Of some disordered intellect. And why ?
 We trust to testimony which we deem
 Worthy of credit. On that we rely,
 Though others its validity deny.
 And this we do, though we have never known
 The persons who this evidence supply,
 Or e'en the character that they have shown ;
 Whether to others' good devoted, or their own.

XXXIII.

And shall we doubt those witnesses, whose time,
Whose labours, sufferings, and lives were given,
Not to secure vast wealth or place sublime,
But to reveal to man the path to Heaven?
To what absurd conclusion are we driven,
If we reject the word of men like these!
What! shall the strongest ties of earth be riven,
To spread o'er isles, and continents, and seas,
Lies which their authors know? Believe it they who please!

XXXIV.

But let them not attempt to wrap in night
Of tenfold horror other deathless minds!
If nothing glorious beam upon their sight
From bleeding Calvary; if the grave confines
Their hopes to earth; O! if indeed there shines
No light from Heaven their gloomy path to cheer,
Let them not grudge to him who inly pines
For purer joys than those which linger here,
Hopes that shall rise and swell through an eternal year.

XXXV.

Much more they ask than rational appears,
When they demand our senses. We refuse
To make surrender of our eyes, and ears,
And touch; believing they were made to use
And trust, not to discredit and abuse!
We cannot, therefore, yield to their demand;
Indeed, we cannot, when we know their views!
For they would wreck us on some dreadful strand,
Where shrieks of death are heard pealing on every hand!

XXXVI.

'Tis not for us, the creatures of a day—
 Of judgment fallible, of heart perverse,
 Oft led by pride and prejudice astray,
 And tempted to proceed from bad to worse—
 'Tis not for us, exposed to Heaven's curse,
 To teach Omniscience what our case requires.
 Better may helpless infant teach its nurse !
 Heaven grant us to subject our vain desires
 To Him, who not the proud but humble soul admires !

XXXVII.

Thomas might justly have been left to rue
 The stubborn unbelief which he displayed;
 'Twas wicked to withhold the credit due
 To declarations most sincerely made
 By men who had themselves been sore afraid
 Of self-deception. If his injured Friend
 Had left him sorrowing, whom could he upbraid ?
 Yet He who pardons those who oft offend,
 Did not refuse to him His mercy to extend.

XXXVIII.

When the disciples were convened once more
 In twilight hour, and Thomas with the rest,
 And had, from apprehension, closed the door,
 Suddenly Jesus entered, and addressed
 To them kind salutations. O how blessed
 That presence which now greeted them again !
 Instant he said to Thomas, sore distressed:
 Behold my hands, where nails inflicted pain,
 And place thy finger on the scars that still remain !

XXXIX.

Reach forth thy hand, and thrust it in my side,
Through which was fiercely driven the Roman spear;
'Thou know'st I suffered on the cross and died;
Know, also, that I now alive appear;
No longer yield to unbelieving fear!
Who but thy Saviour stands before thy sight?
Is it a stranger's voice that thou dost hear?
Thomas was touched, subdued and melted quite;
My Lord! my God! he cried, with rapturous delight!

XL.

Thus, He whose eye could search the inmost soul,
And every thought and every motive see,
Doubtless, beheld in Thomas the control,
Not of a daring, rash impiety,
But of despair; from dark adversity.
He knew the source of all his unbelief
Not to be stubborn pride, but misery,
And kindly granted him a sweet relief
From unbelieving fear and heart-corroding grief.

XLI.

Let none, from his example, with ill will
And daring hatred sacred truth despise,
Lest darkness palpable their vision fill,
And hide the light for ever from their eyes.
'Tis not for us to tell how high may rise
Feelings of opposition to the right,
And still leave hope of mercy from the skies.
Many who treated Christ with rage and spite
Were left to rue their deeds in everlasting night!

XLII.

The Saviour His discourse resumed, and said :

Thomas, because the evidence of sight
Has moved thy mind, thine unbelief is fled.

Consider whether thou hast acted right

In thus withholding thy assent, in spite

Of solemn declarations, often made,

By men removed from all suspicion quite.

What if all others should the truth evade,

Who cannot bring, like thee, their senses to their aid ?

XLIII.

Must I be exiled from my native skies,

And be debarred for ages from my throne,

To give the evidence that sense supplies,

To all the millions that on earth are known ?

Cannot the truth of obvious facts be shown

By other means than this, to candid minds ?

Who, that considers, can refuse to own

That if to sense his judgment he confines,

He must at once arrest all labours, all designs ?

XLIV.

Many such want of candour will not show,

Nor slight the means which Heaven in love bestows,

On guilty, dying men, to let them know

The remedy provided for their woes.

However some may bitterly oppose,

Others will hail with joy that endless rest

Which my vicarious sufferings disclose.

Many what my disciples have confessed

Shall recognize as true, and such shall all be blessed.

XLV.

Thus, all the chosen friends of Him who died
To expiate our guilt, and dry our tears,
Though they had long been most severely tried,
Deliverance found at last from chilling fears;
As after storm the sky more bright appears,
As sickness gives to health a sweeter zest;
As darkness, light; as sorrow joy endears;
So trials past, but rendered them more blest.
Knowing their Lord was risen, their hearts were set at rest.

XLVI.

Their prudence, caution, and excessive fear,
Their gloomy doubts, which long refused to yield
To evidence most obvious and clear—
Lest some deception should remain concealed,
Which in the lapse of time would be revealed—
These very doubts, which harassed them so long,
Blighted their joys, and all their hopes congealed,
Though in themselves involving moral wrong,
Impart to all their statements confirmation strong.

XLVII.

Candour requires of us a full assent
To those who perseveringly repelled
Proofs that were multiplied to such extent,
Who e'en against their senses still rebelled,
Until conviction could not be withheld;
Who, when all doubt of what they saw and heard,
By force of truth was from their minds expelled,
Related the same facts with one accord,
And sacrificed their all to verify their word.

XLVIII.

'Tis, then, a fact that's placed beyond a doubt ;—
 Not what we may, but what we must believe,
 Unless the lamp of knowledge be put out ;
 Hear it, ye wretched ones, who pine and grieve,
 And vainly in your pride attempt to weave
 In Fancy's loom the web of pure delight ;—
 O ! 'tis a glorious fact, that cannot leave
 The shadow of a shade to dim the sight
 Of him who loves the truth, and whose desires are right ;

XLIX.

It is a fact, swelling the tide of joy
 That rolls through highest Heaven its crystal waves
 To cheer immortal spirits—who employ
 Their ceaseless anthems in Jehovah's praise,
 While o'er the Mercy Seat they bend and gaze ;—
 Yes, 'tis a fact, that He who rightly claimed
 Equality with God, shorn of His rays,
 Clothed in a servant's form, abased, defamed,
 Although to bless and not destroy He aimed,

L.

To bear our guilt was crucified and slain ;
 To give us rest lay in the silent grave ;
 To grant us victory rose to life again,
 Triumphant over death, and strong to save.
 Ye ransomed ones, your palms of victory wave !
 Raise your loud Hallelujahs to the skies !
 Cherubic choirs, who tread Heaven's starry pave,
 While blest ye sing, admiring fix your eyes
 On Him who is the source from which your joys arise !

LI.

Soon after the event above described,
The ten disciples—who were well assured,
In spite of prejudices once imbibed,
That He, who had the pains of death endured,
And pardon for the penitent procured,
Had without doubt arisen from the dead—
No longer to their Master's grave allured,
Leaving the city where His blood was shed,
To distant Galilee homeward their footsteps sped.

LII.

Again they visited those varied scenes
Of deep, absorbing, deathless interest, where
They once were daily favoured with the means
Of witnessing the kind, assiduous care
Of Him, whose gifts were offered free as air
To all the sons of want and dire distress,
And e'en the pallid victims of despair.
There, with a zeal that nothing could repress,
He long had meekly toiled to solace and to bless.

LIII.

His deeds of love in characters of light
Were graven on the mountains, hills and plains.
Each city, village, field, disclosed to sight
Some favoured spot, where he had burst the chains
Of sin and death—or given release from pains
Resulting from a thousand forms of woe—
And changed the wail of grief into the strains
Of joy and praise, such as they only know
Whose hearts with grateful love to Him have learned to glow.

LIV.

'Twas sweet to tread those paths which he had trod,
 To roam those fields through which His feet had passed ;
 Sweet to recline upon the verdant sod
 Where He had sat circled by concourse vast,
 Who, from His lips, heard precepts which shall last
 Till Heaven and earth dissolve, and pass away ;
 Yes, sweet their fishing nets once more to cast
 In famed Tiberias' lake, as on the day
 When, called to follow Him, they hastened to obey.

LV.

This noble lake, with all its rugged hills
 And winding shores skirted by cities fair,
 Reminded them of Him whose smile distils
 Peace on those hearts assailed by wan despair.
 For oft it was His custom to repair
 Thither to labour, teach, exhort and pray ;
 Thus showing for the lost his tender care.
 Whether its billows rose or died away,
 They whispered still of Him who taught them to obey.

LVI.

Not merely these mementos of their Lord
 Gladdened their hearts, and made their labours sweet ;
 For He, so loved, so honoured and adored,
 Once more vouchsafed His visit to repeat ;
 The occasion this : They had agreed to meet,
 As usual, on the lake, to ply their trade.
 All night they toiled, and met with sad defeat
 In their attempts. With ample means arrayed,
 Not e'en a single draught successful had they made !

LVII.

Soon as the shades were scattered, and the light
Of morning wrapped the various scenes around,—
The winding strand, the mountain's lofty height,
The quiet surface of the lake profound,
And distant villages, whose murmuring sound
Proclaimed the population roused anew
To hail the earth, with pleasing radiance crowned ;—
Standing upon the shore, plainly in view,
A stranger's lonely form their fixed attention drew.

LVIII.

He seemed to manifest an interest deep
In all their movements, and inquiry made,
Whether, while toil consumed those hours which sleep
Has consecrated to tired Nature's aid,
They had secured those living treasures laid
In the wide storehouse of the azure main.
This courteous inquiry, which displayed
Kind sympathy in all their loss or gain,
Was answered: We have toiled, through all the night, in
vain.

LIX.

Then, to the right, resumed the stranger, cast
Your net, and ye shall meet with good success.
Anxious to reap reward for labours past,
And wondering at directions so express,
At once they felt disposed to do no less
Than make attempt, and ply their net once more.
He who commanded did their effort bless ;
For, though their toil had been in vain before,
'Twas hard to bring their draught in safety to the shore.

LX.

Success which such a miracle revealed
 Persuaded him, whom Jesus loved so well,
 That He, who hitherto had been concealed,
 Was the great Conqueror of Death and Hell;
 And while with joy his heart began to swell,
 To Peter he disclosed the welcome thought.

Peter was seized as with a sudden spell,
 Put on the fisher's coat which he had brought,
 And plunged into the waves, and straight his Master sought.

LXI.

Who would not brave the perils of the sea,
 To meet the presence of the Son of God?
 Where would His true disciples wish to be,
 But where He is, and sheds His love abroad?
 Many Death's shadowy vale have fearless trod,
 To meet His blissful presence in the skies;
 Safely they passed, protected by His rod,
 And sudden found displayed before their eyes
 Glories that filled their hearts with rapturous surprise!

LXII.

The rest of the disciples still remained
 On board their little craft, with toil and care
 Dragging their net, lest loss should be sustained,
 And thus the triumph of success impair.
 Landed, at length, they had the pleasure rare
 Of greeting Him, contrasted with whose smile,
 Kingdoms and thrones are trifles light as air,
 And all that men call great is poor and vile.
 He can give solid peace; earth's promises beguile!

LXIII.

Instant they then beheld, with much surprise,
Provision made their hunger to appease,
By Him who spread the curtain of the skies,
Formed the wide earth and filled the swelling seas,
And holds them in His hand with perfect ease.
They saw a fire of coals, on which were placed,
By Him who of earth's treasury holds the keys,
Fish dressed and cooked, and ready for the taste ;
While full supply of bread the preparation graced.

LXIV.

Having secured the treasure they had caught,
They were invited by their Lord to dine.
They gladly shared with Him the food unbought,
So kindly tendered by His hand divine.
No feast, where luxury and sparkling wine
Allure the palate, could have proved so sweet.
Constrained on pearly sea-beach to recline,
Instead of couches elegant and neat,
They felt no sense of want, seated at Jesus' feet.

LXV.

Impression deep of mingled love and awe
Dwelt on their minds. They feared to ask His name ;
Nor did they need to ask. They plainly saw,
Seated before their eyes, the very same
Mysterious, glorious personage, who came
While they were fishing on this very shore,
To kindle in their hearts the quenchless flame
Of love divine. They loved Him much before ;
Now they not only love, but wonder and adore !

LXVI.

Dinner concluded, catching Peter's eye,
 The Saviour said to Him, in accents kind,
 While the rest listened who were sitting by :
 Peter, disclose to me thy secret mind !
 On searching well thy heart, what dost thou find ?
 Lovest thou me more fervently than these
 Thy fellow-labourers ? Art thou still inclined
 To think that thou couldst welcome death to please
 Thy Master, although fear on all the rest should seize ?

LXVII.

Peter the just reproof with meekness heard :
 Thou knowest I love Thee, was his quick reply.
 Not with resentment for what once occurred,
 But with compassion beaming in His eye,
 Jesus rejoined : My lambs with food supply.
 Pity the poor, the feeble, the distressed,
 And ever promptly to their succour fly.
 Encourage the desponding. Proffer rest,
 In me, to all the souls by sin and grief oppressed.

LXVIII.

Again and yet again, Lovest thou me ?
 In quick succession fell on Peter's ear ;
 As if his pledge must thrice repeated be,
 Because he once had been impelled by fear,
 Thrice to deny and spurn his Saviour dear.
 Grieved now to think how shamefully he fell,
 He cried, with humble look and gushing tear :
 Thou canst the secrets of my bosom tell ;
 Knowing all things, my Lord, Thou knowest I love Thee well !

LXIX.

Then show thy love by act, rather than word,
Replied the Saviour. Feed my precious sheep.
Be the kind shepherd, not the haughty lord
Of my fair heritage. Labour to keep,
Protect and guide my flock, and thou shalt reap,
At last, a rich and glorious reward,
Where ransomed spirits have no tears to weep.
Profession of attachment to thy Lord,
Is but an empty sound ! Let word and deed accord !

LXX.

Do not confound the zeal which comes from Heaven
With that which has its origin below.
Though much alike, decisive marks are given
By which the candid may their difference know.
They both, indeed, with quenchless ardour glow ;
Both brave all obstacles to gain their end ;
And judging merely by the outward show,
Appearances oft to the latter lend
Attractive charms, to which the former can't pretend.

LXXI.

They differ in their spirit, means and aims ;
The former being humble, docile, kind ;
The latter proud, imperious in its claims,
Intractable, presumptuous, sadly blind,
Yet claiming great enlightenment of mind ;
Noisy, censorious, ready to condemn
Without examination ; loth to find
Or to acknowledge excellence in them
Whose coat suits not its taste, e'en to the very hen !

LXXII.

The former is content to judge the tree
 By its plain fruits, disclosed to every eye ;
 The latter thinks it has the power to see
 Into the very heart. It dares to pry
 Into those depths which none but the Most High
 Can penetrate and fathom. It can tell
 The secret motives, and the reasons why
 This or that deed is done: What appears well,
 It knows to be perverse, and done from motives fell.

LXXIII.

The former, e'en when others are in fault,
 Carefully weighs each circumstance which seems
 To mitigate the offence. It fears to exalt
 Mistakes into delinquencies, nor deems
 Idle reports and visionary dreams
 Proofs, sure as Holy Writ, that all is wrong.
 The latter loves to fish in muddy streams.
 If a small fault to what it hates belong,
 It makes the welkin ring with its triumphant song.

LXXIV.

The former loves to scrutinize itself,
 Its motives and its prevalent desires ;
 To watch against deceptive love of pelf,
 The baits of sense and vain ambition's fires ;
 To guard against what selfishness admires,
 Be it in form of pleasure, wealth, or fame ;
 Within itself the latter ne'er retires,
 In search for wrong, but, with a quenchless flame
 Of cruel envy, burns to blast another's name !

LXXV.

The former never boasts of its good deeds,
Its brilliant virtues and superior light,
Thus flattering self—a course which only feeds
And pampers pride, and covers from the sight
A wicked heart, estranged from truth and right.
The latter its own purity commends,
And thinks all others wrapped in shades of night.
Viewing the meek as scarcely Heaven's friends,
To its own acts alone its charity extends.

LXXVI.

The former deeply pities those who err,
And seeks, by measures merciful and kind,
And not by those adapted well to stir
The angry passions, to impress the mind
Of him who has to error's path declined,
With sense of evil that the wrong creates.
The latter feels a secret joy to find
A wrong in those whose principles it hates.
What Charity would heal, it only aggravates.

LXXVII.

Yet, it pretends great pity for the men
Whom it reviles and persecutes ! It sheds,
Perhaps, some cold, deceptive tears, and then
Inflicts remorseless vengeance on their heads ;
Chains, dungeons, all the woes that Nature dreads !
Or, if its power comports not with its will,
If, while they slumber peaceful in their beds,
It cannot seize and persecute and kill,
The tongue becomes the means its wishes to fulfil !

LXXVIII.

Great and intense the sorrow it displays
 To learn, what is not true, that some deemed wise
 And good have sadly erred from wisdom's ways !
 It hears reports like these with deep surprise,
 And hopes they will be found nothing but lies ;
 And yet exults, and makes them pass for true,
 By welcoming each rumour as it flies !
 Sorrow ! 'Tis malice, which it soon must rue !
 God, for such crime, will not withhold the vengeance due !

LXXIX.

'Tis headstrong, confident, assured of right,
 While boldly perpetrating grievous sin ;
 Knows it has goodness, heavenly wisdom, light,
 While others, whose belief is not akin
 To its own errors, do not e'en begin
 To emerge from total darkness into day.
 It hears reluctant, with contemptuous grin,
 Those moral demonstrations which display
 Its own consummate guilt, clear as the solar ray.

LXXX.

Yet, it pretends to great humility ;
 Thanks God for virtues it does not possess ;
 Despises those who do not openly
 Boast of their goodness ; who evince distress
 For want of more entire devotedness !
 It hates to hear humble confession made
 Of imperfection, or unworthiness,
 Or conscious sin, such as made Job afraid
 To meet that piercing eye which nothing could evade !

LXXXI.

Avoid this fiery and fanatic zeal,
Which impudently challenges all right
To guide and dictate for the common weal ;
All knowledge, wisdom, honesty and light ;
And thinks the world doomed to eternal night,
Without its vast discoveries ; and shows
To such as can't embrace them, rage and spite !
Such spirit, in degree, didst thou disclose,
When thou didst claim more love than others whom I chose.

LXXXII.

Who has most piety, who shall divide
A richer spoil and wear a brighter crown,
Belongs to me hereafter to decide.
Who claim the preference, will receive my frown.
My real, faithful friends, never look down,
Proud and contemptuous, on the humble soul,
Thinking its love inferior to their own.
They watch against the insidious control
Of spiritual pride, which mars and spoils the whole.

LXXXIII.

Let others praise thee. Claim not thou applause
With thy own lips. He that himself exalts
Shall be abased, is one of Heaven's laws.
Endeavour to discover thy own faults,
Instead of others'. If thy brother halts,
Be merciful ; nor hastily believe
He wilfully against the right revolts.
Meekly from error's path his soul relieve,
Nor seek his good by means which only wound and grieve.

LXXXIV.

Tell me no more how faithful you will be.

How much reliance you can safely place
Upon your will, you now most clearly see.

'Tis better to rely upon my grace,

To meet the exigence of every case
Of trial that may test your love and zeal.

Shame and confusion dire will clothe the face
Of such as their own weakness never feel ;
Nor to a higher power with confidence appeal.

LXXXV.

If thou wouldst show thy love in clearest light,

Follow thy Master in the path He trod ;

Maintain a firm attachment to the right,

Nor quail when stern oppression lifts her rod,

Committing, trustfully, thy cause to God,

Showing a spirit meek, forgiving, kind ;

Then, whether men shall censure or applaud,

Award thee honour or pronounce thee blind,

Thou shalt have joy at last, and sweet acceptance find.

LXXXVI.

Thus to the chosen few, who oft had shared

His toils and griefs, and witnessed with delight

His works of love and mercy, who had dared

To follow and to reverence Him, in spite

Of bitter scorn, the Saviour put to flight

All doubt and fear, and gave them solid peace,

By frequently appearing to their sight.

His welcome smile made all their sorrows cease,

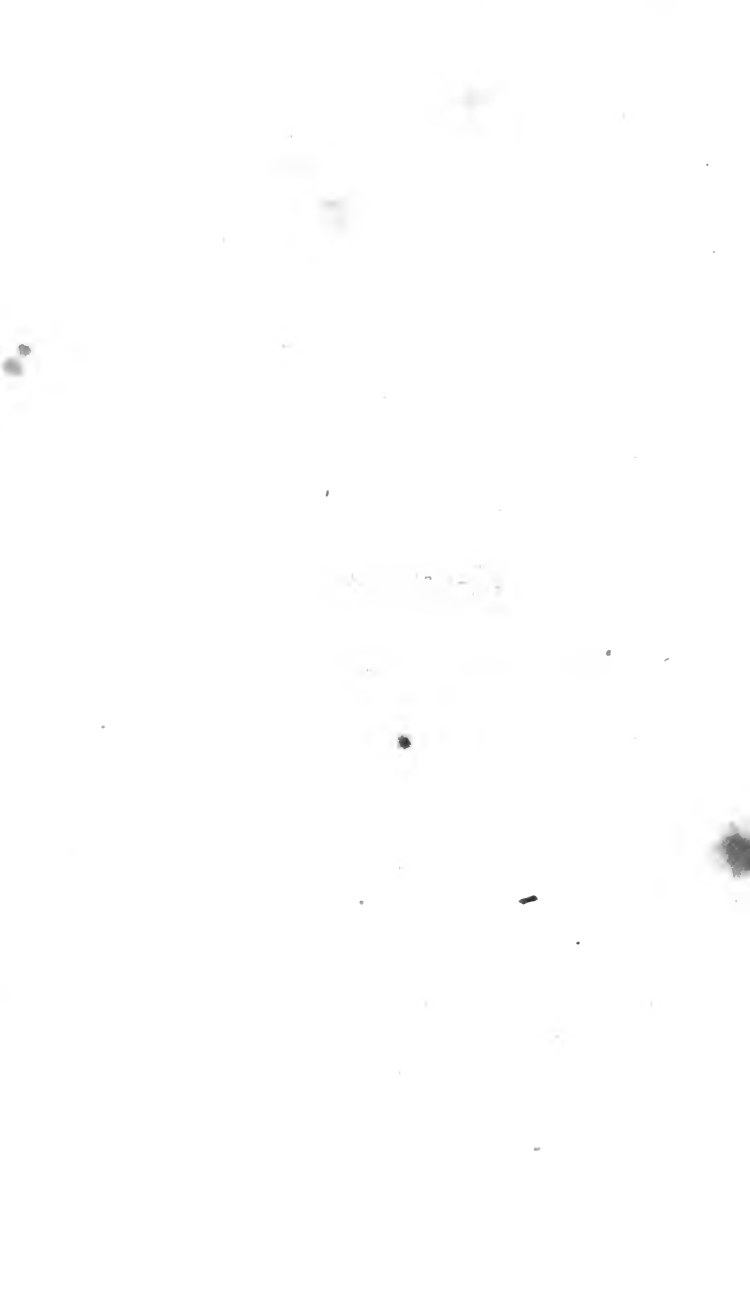
And from their doubts and fears gave them a sweet release.

LXXXVII.

Yet many other friends who loved Him well,
And who had not beheld Him since He rose,
Were anxious now to see Him, and to tell
How much they felt indebted, and disclose
To Him their fervent gratitude. He chose
To indulge their ardent wishes. Hence He spread,
And that without the knowledge of His foes,
The news that He had risen from the dead,
And all His friends would meet on Tabor's lofty head.

CANTO IX.

THE HAPPY MEETING.



CANTO IX.

THE HAPPY MEETING.

ANALYSIS.

Apostrophe to Truth.—Morning.—Friends of the Saviour from all parts of Palestine hastening to Mount Tabor; to enjoy an interview with their Master.—Their mutual congratulations on assembling there.—Mount Tabor and the surrounding scenery described.—Historical incidents associated with the places in the vicinity.—Peter describes the scene of the transfiguration.—The Saviour suddenly appears in the midst of them.—Their joyous acclamations.—Their dismissal to their several places of abode.—Certainty of the Saviour's resurrection argued from His repeated appearances.—Certainty of a general resurrection.—Apostrophe to the bereaved mother, the youthful saint on a dying bed, the aged Christian and departed friends.

TRUTH.

OCEAN, whose depth none but the Eternal Mind
Can fathom or explore; where lie concealed
Treasures exhaustless, glorious, refined,
And never yet to angel minds revealed;
Thy crystal waves have never been congealed
By rigid frost, nor into tumult thrown
By raging storm. Smooth as the burnished shield,
Thy brilliant surface; where are mirrored shown
All forms of life and love e'en to Omniscience known.

Celestial spirits, with untiring wing
Over thy broad expanse hovering, survey
Their own reflected images, which fling
A brightness purer than the source of day;
Nor does a sight so flattering drive away

Sense of dependence, or awaken pride,
But kindles loftier purpose to display
Their love to Him who, through creation wide,
Pours, from His changeless throne, of bliss the exhaustless tide.

Nor their own forms alone do they behold
Reflected by thy depths, in fadeless light.
They see ten thousand other forms unfold
In thy pure wave celestial beauties bright,
Or features darker than the hue of night,—
Power, Wisdom, Justice, all the Virtues fair,
Selfishness, Pride abhorrent to the sight,
And all the Vices heralding Despair ;—
All that is bright or base they see reflected there.

Infernal spirits dread to hover o'er
Thy broad expanse, and on thy wonders gaze.
Fain would they ever wander from thy shore,
Nor meet the brilliant light that constant plays
On all thy sparkling depths—a light whose blaze
Wakes, in their hearts accursed, appalling fear ;
But He whose arm Almighty strength displays,
Compels them to survey thy surface clear,
And see themselves undone, and drop the scalding tear.

Man is reluctant to approach thy shore,
And view his darkened image mirrored there,
And know and feel he never can restore
Its brightness by his own unaided care.
Prone to presumption, or to fell despair,
He from himself would gladly turn away,
And fill his mind with trifles light as air ;
Yet, on his soul Hope sheds no gladdening ray,
Unless, in thy clear depths, his image he survey.

Led by a hand divine, with steady eye
To look on thee, not only does he feel
That he is lost, but hails the remedy
Which love and pity to his view reveal,—
A remedy which makes a strong appeal

To all that kindles hope, or wakens dread,
 And one that should subdue a heart of steel.
 He hails the Lamb whose blood for sin was shed,
 And saved from guilt and wrath, with joy lifts up his head.

Thou dost embosom a pure world, whose sun
 Never declines, whose sky is ever clear,
 Whose boundless scenes have been explored by none
 But Him, to whose broad eye all things appear.
 Who would not wish to rove 'mid scenes so dear?—
 Mountains, that hide their summits in the skies,
 Plains, where no stagnant lakes, or deserts drear
 Appal the sight! there, fadeless flowers arise,
 And golden harvests wave, and charm the wondering eyes.

There, deathless spirits gather choicest flowers,
 And taste ambrosial fruits, and quaff pure streams,
 And task for ever their exalted powers,
 In search of stores whose wealth exceeds the dreams
 Of eastern fable! There, each gem that gleams,
 Emits no fading and deceptive light;
 All that seems beautiful, is what it seems!
 Would that these treasures once could meet my sight!
 O for one gem, at least, to brighten sorrow's night!



I.

Now lovely shines, upon Esdraelon's plain,
 The bright and balmy morn: and Kishon's stream
 Rolls on, in sparkling beauty, to the main;
 The silver waves of smooth Tiberias gleam
 With purest lustre, 'neath the solar beam;
 Fair Tabor's lofty brow is bathed in light;
 Widely around, the flowery meadows teem
 With fragrance sweet; each distant mountain height
 Seems crowned with burnished gold that shines intensely
 bright.

II.

From every quarter of the Holy Land,
With hope and joy bright beaming in their eye,
Hasten to Tabor many a pilgrim band,
To hail the sight of Him who once did die
'Mid cruel scorn and bitter obloquy,
To gain for them bright mansions in the skies.
One object fills their hearts. They long to fly
On wings of love, once more to fix their eyes
On Him whose blissful smile their every want supplies.

III.

Some, that had once been maimed, and doomed to creep
Prone on the earth, oppressed by sense of woe,
Now, like the bounding hart, exulting leap;
Others, whose movement had been sad and slow
From withered limb, a sprightly vigour show.
Cheerly walk those whom Palsy's crushing might
Had reft of strength, making them keenly know
The grief of helplessness. O what delight
Expands their grateful hearts, when Tabor meets their sight!

IV.

Some, that had felt the pains of burning thirst
From raging fever that no art could quell,
(Dreading, but unprepared to meet the worst,)
Think of the past, and now remember well
That potent voice which broke the fearful spell;
Calmed the fierce tide that rushed through every vein;
Bade hope return, and in their bosoms dwell,
And instant raised them from the bed of pain.
They long to hear the tones of that loved voice again.

V.

Some, that, from very birth, wrapped in deep night,
Had never seen the earth, the seas, the skies,
Now call to mind, with most intense delight,
That moment of enchantment and surprise,
When Love divine unsealed their rayless eyes,
And bade new scenes of beauty, grandeur, power,
In boundless prospect, all around them rise.
The sight of every tree and herb and flower,
Wakes recollection sweet of that transporting hour.

VI.

And there are some whose minds had been bereft
Of Reason's sway, and ruled by Passion's rage,
Like maddened horse that has his rider left,
Or angry lion bursting from his cage,
Prepared to crush, from youth to hoary age.
Among the tombs they made their constant stay;
No art of man their fierceness could assuage:
Restored to reason, now they wend their way,
To welcome Him who changed their darkness into day.

VII.

Some, too, there are, who once had tasted death;
Had gone beyond the narrow bounds of time,
Whither existence is not fleeting breath,—
Seized by that Power mysterious and sublime
Which, from a world of sorrow and of crime,
Drags us resistless to the judgment seat.
Restored once more to their own native clime,
To fill sad, broken hearts with rapture sweet,
They hasten now to bow at their Deliverer's feet.

VIII.

Thus, from all parts of verdant Palestine,
Judea, Galilee, Samaria,
Anxious to see once more their Lord divine,
The objects of His kindness make their way
To Tabor's mount, which smiles beneath the ray
Of cloudless sun, and, like a beacon fair,
Still guides them onward. All, without delay,
Quicken their step, as longing to be there.
The sight of Him they love engrosses all their care.

IX.

Like pyramid sublime, built by those hands
That formed the earth, and spread the starry sky,
This solitary mount in grandeur stands,
Without an envious rival towering nigh.
Let us in thought ascend its summit high.
Who can depict its charming prospect wide!
What scenes of sweet enchantment meet the eye!
Turning around, now swift before us glide
Streams, meadows, valleys, hills, and undulating tide.

X.

Northwest, the city Nazareth appears,
Spread out extensive on the sloping side
Of towering hill. There, from his earliest years,
Once lived the glorious Saviour; and hence pride
And bigotry, which stubbornly denied
That out of Nazareth could come aught of good,
Determined His pretensions to deride.
There sought His neighbours, bent to shed His blood,
To thrust Him from the hill on which their city stood.

XI.

Northward is Cana, where, at nuptial feast,
He first began to show His power divine ;
For, being in attendance as a guest,
When He beheld the juice of grape decline,
He straight converted water into wine ;
Thus welcoming our smiles as well as tears.
Far to the North of this, in waving line,
Syro-Phœnician Lebanon appears,
Crowned with its cedars green, the growth of thousand
years.

XII.

Northeast, encompassed round with rugged hills,
Like silver mirror 'neath the sun's bright ray,
Tiberias' sea its broad, deep basin fills,
Through which the noble Jordan makes its way,
While on its course its rippling wavelets play.
Cities adorn its shores—Tiberias famed
For its warm baths, Capernaum proud and gay,
Where dwelt the Saviour, and severely blamed
Its stubborn unbelief. It would not be reclaimed !

XIII.

Still farther South, Gilboa's mountains rise,
Barren and bleak. There no refreshing dews
Distil their precious treasure from the skies.
While the eye rests upon their sombre hues,
Sadly, upon their sloping sides, it views
The field once crimsoned by the blood of Saul
And Jonathan, of whose sad death the news
Sent grief and terror to the hearts of all.
Thousands, with bitter tears, mourned their untimely fall !

XIV.

Directly South, at distance not remote,
The little city Nain in beauty lies,
At the mere name of which, instantly float
Sweet recollections in our memories,
While grateful feelings in our hearts arise.
Once, from that city, slow and solemn moved
A train performing the sad obsequies
Of youthful son, by tender mother loved.
Her tears of deep distress her strong affection proved.

XV.

And yet her tears, so copious, were but brief,
Like vernal showers that quickly pass away ;
For One was present who beheld her grief,
And felt his heart dissolved in sympathy.
Resolved His power and goodness to display,
He stopped the precious burden. Standing near
The cold pale youth that in the coffin lay,
He bade him rise. The mandate pierced his ear.
His grateful mother's smile brightened her falling tear.

XVI.

Far distant, in the same direction, stand
Samaria's mountains, not unknown to fame—
Ebal and Gerizim, with summits grand,
Yet in their form and aspect not the same.
Ebal is barren, as if scorched by flame ;
While Gerizim is green as Eden's land.
On these, when first God's chosen hither came,
Trembling with awe they stood, by His command ;
The blessing and the curse invoking from His hand ;—

XVII.

Blessing, if they obeyed His holy will—
Blessing in herds and flocks, in corn and wine;
In rains that water, dews that soft distil,
And speak the goodness of a hand divine.
But if from right and truth their steps decline,
Then curses, bringing ruin in their train—
Blight to their harvest, murrain to their kine;
Poverty, sickness, famine, war, and pain,
In all its forms. Their hopes should all prove vain!

XVIII.

Southwest, the city Shunem meets the sight,
Where oft Elisha once was entertained,
And welcomed as a prophet with delight.
His hostess kind, when her fond heart was pained
With sore bereavement, bitterly complained,
And poured her sorrows in the prophet's ear.
He, by his powerful intercession, gained
The object she desired. Her child so dear,
Restored again to life, soon banished every tear.

XIX.

Not far from hence, Megiddo's lovely vale
To memory's eye presents a sight of woe.
Determined Pharaoh Necho to assail,
The good Josiah there received a blow,
Which caused from deadly wound his blood to flow.
All ages, sexes, ranks, deplored his fall;
For better prince no age or clime could show;
None purer, juster, none more kind to all;
But ah! their bitter grief could not his life recall!

XX.

Far to the West, and near the swelling waves,
Carmel displays its ever-verdant side ;
Renowned for meadows, forests, streams and caves,
And beauteous as a fair and blooming bride ;
While farther North, opens in prospect wide
The Western sea, blent with the azure sky ;
On whose broad surface floating navies ride,
While on their towering masts gay streamers fly,
And sport amid the breeze and billows rolling high.

XXI.

Widely round Tabor's solitary mount,
On every hand extends Esdraelon's plain ;
While issuing forth from an adjacent fount,
The Kishon rolls its waters to the main ;
Oft crimsoned by the blood of thousands slain.
'Twas on its banks, the host of Jabin stood,
Resolved their master's empire to maintain,
When Barak, with ten thousand, like a flood,
Rushed from this mountain's top to meet the strife of blood.

XXII.

Then thundered on the breeze the shout of war ;
Spears glittered, falchions beamed intensely bright ;
Steeds snuffed the storm of battle, and the car
Rushed on the serried ranks with dreadful might ;
Discord and Terror mingled in the fight ;
Deep groans and horrid curses stunned the ear ;
Thick fell the blows, blood gushed upon the sight ;
O sad and most terrific 'twas, to hear
The shriek of those who fell unwept by pity's tear !

XXIII.

Like snow-flakes mingling with the briny wave,
Melted the hosts of Sisera away ;
Many in Kishon found a watery grave ;
Not one escaped the slaughter of that day ;
Even their leader proud refused to stay,
And from the strife in consternation fled ;
And while asleep in Heber's tent he lay.
A nail, by Jael's hand driven through his head,
Numbered the haughty chief among the silent dead.

XXIV.

Through latticed window oft, with anxious eye,
Looked his fond mother, waiting for her son.
Why stays his chariot ? she exclaimed ; O ! why
So long delays the shout of victory won ?
Her ladies wise replied : The work is done !
His haughty foes ere this are overthrown,
Yielding him fame while time its course shall run.
And hence, of all the gathered spoil that's shown,
The fairest, richest meed is due to him alone !

XXV.

Soon will he come, adorned with splendid dress
Of needle-work wrought by the skilful hand
Of Israel's daughters ; soon will his caress
Meet thy fond smile ! With aspect bland,
And words such as smooth flattery can command,
Thus they replied. Her heart replied the same ;
But vainly at the window did she stand,
And oft in mournful tones invoke his name ;
For he, so fondly loved and cherished, never came !

XXVI.

Thus, from the summit of this mountain high,
A thousand varied objects greet the sight,
Which waken stirring thoughts, and through the eye
Beam on the heart and fill it with delight;—
A thousand acts of our Jehovah's might,
A thousand pledges of His care and love,
A thousand wonders robed in living light,
Wrought by the power of Him who reigns above;
Wisely adapted all, His faithfulness to prove.

XXVII.

This is the mount upon whose height sublime
Christ had appointed all His friends to meet;
And now approaches rapidly the time
Destined to witness their communion sweet.
Already hundreds climb, with willing feet,
Its sloping sides—joy sparkling in their eyes,
Love dwelling in their hearts—anxious to greet
Him who had freely left the upper skies,
To expiate their sins and heal their maladies.

XXVIII.

How joyful is their meeting! Few of all
Have ever seen, ere now, each other's face,
Or can a single circumstance recall
By which a past acquaintanceship to trace.
Their common object with the time and place—
These are their introduction; these the tie
That binds their hearts in mutual embrace.
Each glowing countenance, each sparkling eye,
Tells what excites their love and wakes their sympathy.

XXIX.

As radiant worlds around their central sun,
Warmed by his beams, attracted by his force,
In perfect harmony their circles run—
Making sweet music, and not discord hoarse,
Nor ever wander from their proper course—
So, hearts expanded by the Saviour's love,
Not only are impelled toward Him, love's Source,
But (each in its own sphere) harmonious move,
And mutual fellowship and warm affection prove.

XXX.

What though no treasured recollections sweet
Of common home or kindred, serve to bind
Their hearts in mutual concord, when they meet?
A nobler bond of fellowship they find,
And one that more completely sways the mind
With all its powers! It is the love they feel
To the same Master, generous and kind.
Through all their hearts the same emotions steal,
While low before His feet, in homage deep they kneel.

XXXI.

Where'er His lovely image they behold,
Whether its lustre bright or dim appear,
They wait not, e'en a moment, to be told
That what they see should be to them most dear.
They cannot but esteem it, and would fear
To undervalue, overlook, or slight
One whom the Saviour, from His blissful sphere,
Looks down upon with favour and delight;
Much less are they inclined to treat him with despise.

XXXII.

Some, of their perfect love in boastful strain
Are always talking, and yet fearless smite
Their Christian brother ; feel no pain,
Experience no remorse ; but take delight
In picturing, in colours dark as night,
Defects which their own jaundiced eyes create.
Those that with them in all respects unite,
They warmly love ; others they warmly hate.
So the devouring Pard or Tiger loves his mate !

XXXIII.

This is not Christian love, but party zeal,
Derived from self, and making self its end ;
Treating with disregard the public weal,
And giving none the character of friend
Who does not feel disposed his aid to lend
To party purposes. 'Tis very kind
And condescending to all those who bend
To its own favourite wishes, but inclined
All others to regard as obstinately blind.

XXXIV.

Not such the spirit of the Saviour's friends,
Assembled now on Tabor's glorious height ;
They meet, not to secure their private ends—
These are neglected or forgotten quite—
But to salute each other with delight,
As common followers of their risen Lord.
In one transcendent object all unite,
Which binds their hearts in firm and sweet accord,
And stirs afresh that love which is its own reward.

XXXV.

Who can describe the blissful interchange
Of thought and look and feeling which succeeds
Their mutual recognition ! Each has strange
And spirit-stirring incidents and deeds
To tell his brother. Each one needs
Hours to communicate what he has seen
And known of his Deliverer. Each one heeds,
With breathless interest and transport keen,
Those facts which show how kind their glorious Lord has
been.

XXXVI.

One tells of withered hand long useless found,
Or amputated limb, or palsied frame,
By touch or word restored, or rendered sound ;
Another, while his eyes betray the flame
Of love within, tells how the Saviour came
To heal his dying servant ; while a third,
With thrilling gratitude, repeats the name
Of child restored to life. All hearts are stirred
By deeds of wondrous love which they have seen or heard.

XXXVII.

But what seems most absorbing, and excites
Their highest joy, and calls for loudest praise,
And in one channel all their hearts unites,
Is not those wondrous and sublime displays
Of power and wisdom, tenderness and grace,
Made to secure merely their temporal weal.
They joy to know He pitied every case
Of want and woe ; but greater joy they feel
In hopes which none but He could proffer or reveal.

XXXVIII.

They have full knowledge of His power and skill
To heal the soul, however maimed, debased,
Or crushed by sin ; to emancipate the will
From moral servitude ; correct the taste ;
Recall the warm affections when misplaced,
And fix them on right objects ; form anew
God's image in the heart, now all defaced
And marred by disobedience ; subdue
The mind, with all its powers to love the Good, the True.

XXXIX.

Hence, their chief joy to tell of sins forgiven ;
Succour vouchsafed in peril's trying hour ;
Light beaming on their path from highest heaven,
To cheer when gathering clouds begin to lower ;
Strength to resist temptation's threatening power ;
Support when bowed and crushed 'neath sorrow's load ;
Defence from him who seeks but to devour ;
Counsel, to guide them safely in the road
That leads to endless bliss ; and all by grace bestowed.

XL.

Thus, scarcely conscious of the lapse of time,
Waiting the presence of their glorious Friend,
They mutual converse hold on themes sublime ;
With pure delight, both heart and tongue they lend
To subjects so engrossing. Angels bend
From the azure sky to listen, and obtain,
Perchance, some knowledge of those ties which blend
Attractions wonderful, and sought in vain
In their own perfect world, where joys eternal reign.

XLI.

At length the apostle Peter, deeply stirred
By memory sweet of what he once beheld
On Tabor's height—of which none ever heard
Who had not seen it—felt himself impelled
To state a fact which all the times of eld
Had never paralleled ; a grand event
Which never from his mind could be expelled.
He craved their audience, and they gave assent,
And while he thus did speak, listened with looks intent :

XLII.

Once was disclosed upon this mountain's brow,
A glorious vision, whose transcendent sheen
Surpasses thought. I trace the picture now,
As graven on my heart by hand unseen.
It seems like happy isle, for ever green,
In memory's wide and dreary waste displayed.
As tender mothers, thrilled with transport, lean
O'er slumbering babes in infant charms arrayed,
Thus lingers my own heart o'er hues that cannot fade.

XLIII.

Oft had I stood upon this towering height,
And viewed the glorious scenes that round it shine.
Who can survey, without intense delight,
The distant mountain with its curving line ?
The far-off sea, with its deep waves of brine ?
The river Kishon, rolling to the main ?
Esdraelon's plain, spread out by hand divine ?
Yet all these objects then seemed poor and vain.
The soul that's caught to Heaven, seeks not the earth again !

XLIV.

Fair was the day. The sun shone bright and clear;
No intervening cloud obscured his rays;
Pure and transparent was the atmosphere;
A thousand vernal songsters tuned their lays,
As offering to their great Creator praise;
Silence prevailed, save that the zephyrs played
Among the flowers, and Nature seemed to raise
A soft, sweet voice of gladness, and displayed
Her gratitude to Him who all her treasures made.

XLV.

Such was the day when,—summoned by our Lord,—
Myself and James and John, on Tabor high
Beheld a sight which, rightly to record,
Would task the pen of angels. From the sky
Two shining ones appeared, and standing nigh,
Conversed with Christ in low yet solemn tone,
With sweet affection beaming in their eye.
Their beauteous forms in radiant glory shone;
They seemed like angels fair, yet well their names are known.

XLVI.

Moses was one, the founder of our laws;
The other was Elias, first in fame
Among the prophets who maintained the cause
Of sacred truth, and put its foes to shame.
Now, to hold converse sweet with Christ, they came;
As 'twere a privilege to leave the sky,
And visit Him who, when He would reclaim
The lost and perishing, was doomed to die!
They showed by plaintive sighs that danger hovered nigh.

XLVII.

Yet joyous smiles were mingled with those sighs,
As if, beyond the clouds that met their sight,
A glorious vision burst upon their eyes,
Clothed in a radiance intensely bright.
Doubtless, they saw that pure and heavenly light
That beamed in splendour from the Saviour's tomb,
And scattered darkness from the realms of night.
They knew that He must die, to avert our doom ;
But saw Him leave the grave, and dissipate its gloom.

XLVIII.

While He held converse with these heralds bright,
A glory that transcended far their own
Beamed forth at once upon our dazzled sight ;
Our Master's form in living splendour shone,
Such as, to mortal eye, was never known ;
His countenance divinely glorious beamed,
Like the full radiance of the noonday sun ;
His raiment white with purest lustre gleamed ;—
Of splendour so intense our minds had never dreamed.

XLIX.

O how divinely bright His visage shone !
Transporting every sense ; dazzling the eye ;
Attracting with its beauty, from the throne
Of Love, blest spirits, overjoyed to fly
On rapid wings to earth, and, standing nigh,
Look on the Image of the Holy One
With admiration deep and rapture high !
His glorious beauty then outshone the sun ;
And yet, He bled and died, to save us when undone !

L.

My heart was filled with most intense delight,
When I beheld this glorious display;
Transported with the heavenly vision bright,
I knew not what to do or what to say.
It seemed to steal my senses quite away.
Here, I exclaimed,—amid a scene so fair—
O Master! good it is for us to stay!
Let us three tents erect with pious care,
That Thou and Thy loved guests may find a shelter there!

LI.

Scarce from my lips these strange remarks did fall,
Betraying thoughts that could not be expressed,
When a bright cloud did overshadow all;
From which this solemn language was addressed,
Pealing on every ear Heaven's high behest:
This is my Son beloved; well pleased am I
Always in Him. Would ye be ever blest?
Meekly obey His voice. For succour fly
To His extended arms; nor other refuge try!

LII.

A solemn awe upon our spirits fell,
Depriving us of strength. Prostrate we lay
Upon the ground unconscious; nor can tell
What further passed upon that wondrous day,
Before our visitants had sped their way
In transport upward to the realms of light.
How long they tarried, is not ours to say;
The Saviour by a touch dispelled our fright,
And when we rose from earth the scene had vanished quite.

LIII.

When from the mount descended, we pursued
Our Master's steps across Esdraelon's plain,—
With deeper love and reverence imbued
For Him whose glory, like a golden chain,
Had bound Him to our hearts; trying in vain
To solve the mystery we had seen and heard;
Of which we long conversed in rapturous strain,—
He strictly charged us not to speak a word,
To any human soul, of what had just occurred,

LIV.

Until He should have risen from the dead.
Fully persuaded that He could not die,
We all were much amazed at what He said.
Oft we conversed, and vainly sought to pry
Into His meaning. Question and reply
Seemed only to involve in deeper shade
That which was hidden from our mental eye.
Now, all is clearly to our minds displayed.
Jesus has conquered Death and full atonement made.

LV.

Soon we expect to hail, with sweet delight,
That countenance which beamed divinely fair,
In sight of angels, on this mountain height;
With solemn reverence to His feet repair,
And find our glowing hearts more happy there
Than if expanded by the bliss of Heaven.
Ye who have known His love and tender care,
For wants removed, griefs quelled and sins forgiven,
Welcome your Lord, whose might the chains of death has
riven!

LVI.

Scarce had he ended, when, revealed to view
In form of majesty and meekness blent,
Stood in their midst One whom they plainly knew :
'Twas He who had from highest Heaven been sent,
Of sin to avert the dreadful punishment ;
'Twas Jesus come, not like some conqueror proud
Who haughty nations to his will has bent,
And now demands applauses long and loud,
In homage to his fame, from the tumultuous crowd ;

LVII.

But come to give to those who knew Him well
By personal intercourse, the proof complete
That He had triumphed over Death and Hell,
Trampled the great Destroyer 'neath His feet,
And opened access to the Mercy Seat,—
By His own precious blood most freely shed,
The claims of violated law to meet.
In short, He came, before their eyes to spread
Undoubted proof that He had risen from the dead ;—

LVIII.

Not in that dazzling majesty arrayed
Which once illumined Tabor's summit high,
And rendered those who saw it sore afraid.
In kindness to His friends, He had laid by
That splendour which would overpower the eye ;
And showed Himself in aspect just the same
As that He wore ere He was doomed to die,
When, seeking neither pleasure, wealth, or fame,
He showed His healing power 'mid toil, reproach and shame.

LIX

More than five hundred persons—who had shared
His frequent conversation, and surveyed
His features often ; who were well prepared
To frustrate all attempts, however made,
To cheat their senses ; who were much afraid
Of self-deception ;—now were well assured
That He who in the tomb had once been laid,
After the pangs of bitter death endured,
Had triumphed o'er the grave, and deathless hope procured.

LX.

'Twas no illusion placed before their sight,
To mock the vision of a thousand eyes,
And wrap all truth in hues of darkest night ;
Making the immortal mind the sport of lies,
Dashing the sun for ever from the skies,
And leaving man the victim of despair,
Rather than blest with hope that never dies.
Beamed on their eyes the Saviour's features there ;
His well known voice of love pierced the cool mountain air.

LXI.

Peace, said Inmanuel, my own peace I give ;
Not such as flows from flattery and deceit ;
But such as bids the dying mourner live,
And renders e'en the cup of sorrow sweet.
O ! with what joy His presence now they greet !
They know and feel His word is not in vain ;
Peace they enjoy, and, falling at His feet,
Welcome, with transport, His triumphant reign.
Bound to His peaceful throne by love's immortal chain

LXII.

Now burst spontaneous from every tongue,
Strains such as angels' lips have never used,
Such Hallelujahs as alone are sung
By ransomed saints: O Thou, who wast abused—
'Tis thus they cry—whom haughty Scribes refused,
Reviled, aspersed and fastened to the tree;
For us, Thy flesh was scourged and sorely bruised;
For us, Thy blood was shed on Calvary;
For us, Thine arm o'er Death has gained the victory.

LXIII.

O Love Almighty, great beyond the thought
Of finite minds intelligent; whose height
Transcendent, and whose depths profound, leave nought
With which we can compare it; peerless quite,
Adorable and dazzling the sight
Of angels and archangels; only known
In all its majesty and lustre bright,
To Him who all this boundless love has shown—
Reign o'er our yielding hearts, and make them all thine own!

LXIV.

What recompense, Immanuel, shall we give
For all that Thou hast suffered, in our stead?
'Tis by Thy death of scorn and pain we live;
'Tis by Thy precious blood, most freely shed,
That wrath is now averted from our head;
'Tis by Thy tears our tears are wiped away;
Thou in the grave didst make Thy lowly bed,
To change its fearful darkness into day,
And light our path to heaven with Hope's undying ray.

LXV.

All hail, triumphant Conqueror ! Let Thy name
In every land, by every tribe be sung ;
Kindling in every heart love's quenchless flame,
And calling rapturous praise from every tongue ;
Let every golden harp, in Heaven be strung,
To celebrate Thy glories all divine ;
Low, at thy feet, let every crown be flung,
That, starred with gems, on brows immortal shine !
No crown in heaven or earth can be compared with thine !

LXVI.

How low our highest thoughts, how poor and cold
Our warmest love ; how far beneath Thy due,
Our homage, though increased a thousand fold !
O that each feeling of our hearts but knew
Thy matchless worth ; that each transporting view,
Formed of thy beauty, had a heart to feel ;
That all our faculties and senses too
Possessed both heart and tongue ! They all should kneel,
In worship at Thy feet, and there their love reveal !

LXVII.

Thus, the delighted followers of their Lord
Expressed in glowing terms their feelings strong ;
Bound each to each, in firm and sweet accord,
And uttering all the same triumphant song.
And now already had they lingered long
Upon the sacred mount, as loth to leave
One who for them had suffered so much wrong ;
When Jesus vanished, not their hearts to grieve,
But to remand them home, ere the approach of eve.

LXVIII.

With hearts still lingering on the sacred spot,
They all descended to Esdraelon's plain,
And each his separate habitation sought;
With few exceptions, never more again
To see that form, that once for them was slain;
To hear that voice, that all their griefs could quell;
'Till 'scaped, at length, from sin and toil and pain,
They in his presence should be called to dwell,
And, with the ransomed throng, His glorious triumphs tell.

LXIX.

'Tis past conjecture, then ; 'tis clearly shown—
By oft repeated visits to His friends,
Furnishing proofs not to be overthrown
By all the art that wit or genius lends,
Or wily sophistry, that twists and bends
Undoubted facts, its purpose foul to meet,
And fain would hide whatever truth offends ;—
That Christ has placed all things beneath His feet
And to His friends has made e'en Death's long slumber
sweet.

LXX.

He freely died, that they might never die
The second death. He rose to life again,
That e'en their lifeless forms, which mouldering lie
In the cold grave, might, freed from every stain,
Reorganized, incapable of pain,
Disease or death, in glorious beauty dressed,
Reanimated, be prepared to reign
In life eternal, in that world of rest,
Where all his blood-washed saints are in His presence
blest.

LXXI.

His glorious resurrection from the dead
Is the sure pledge of theirs. Both He and they
One body form, of which He is the Head.
Shall His own body moulder in decay,
For ever wrapped in night, that knows no ray
Of light, or hope? No! He who burst the tomb,
Tearing with ease its iron bars away,
Has not involved it in so sad a doom,
But will restore it safe, robed in immortal bloom!

LXXII.

Shall the first fruits be gathered from the field,
With shouts of triumph, and the golden store
That still remains unripe, no harvest yield;
Never be placed upon the threshing-floor,
Nor into barns the tide of plenty pour?
Neglected, trampled, mingled with the dust,
Shall it be left to perish evermore?
No! He who cannot disappoint our trust,
In this capacious field His sickle yet will thrust!

LXXIII.

Shall the soft whispers of the genial Spring
Burst the rude bonds of Winter; and restore
Fresh life and beauty to the flowers; and fling
The sparkling waves of bliss on every shore?
And shall the human form awake no more?
Is there no arm in Heaven, that's strong to save?
Yes, the deep love that all our sorrow's bore,
Will yet complete its triumph o'er the grave;
And wide, through all its realms, its glorious banner wave!

LXXIV.

Even the worm that crawls beneath our feet
Awaits a higher destiny. The hand
That formed the stars, adjusts its winding sheet ;
The mighty One, that in His wisdom planned
Systems of worlds, in order glorious, grand,
Symmetrical, preserves it, with a care
Such as no other being can command ;
Transforms it, makes it beautiful and fair,
And gives it golden wings, to revel in the air.

LXXV.

And shall that form of majesty and grace,
That walks erect and stately, and enshrines
A soul immortal, beaming through its face ;
Endued with organs, each of which combines
More wonders than proud science yet divines ;
Organs of sense and thought, by which the soul
Explores the wealth contained in Nature's mines ;
Measures stupendous worlds that round it roll,
And brings the elements beneath its wide control ;

LXXVI.

O ! shall that form, thus dignified and graced,
Be ruined quite, abandoned, thrown away,
And lost ; as if it never had embraced
A living spirit, never given display
To thoughts more rapid than the vivid ray
That forms the lightning's wing ; felt no desires,
Hope, fear, love, hatred, feelings grave or gay,
Emotions deathless as those living fires
That ceaseless burn in Heaven, to which the soul aspires ?

LXXVII.

Then may the grovelling worm look with disdain
On lordly man, as his inferior quite ;
As destined to a life of toil and pain,
Succeeded by no transformation bright,
But by the horrors of an endless night ;
And man must look upon the yawning tomb,
Not with enlivening hope, but pale affright ;
As shrouding in its deep, eternal gloom,
The wreck of all his strength, his beauty and his bloom !

LXXVIII.

Not such the degradation that impends
A form assumed by God's eternal Son ;
Before whose presence every angel bends ;
By whose command the stars their courses run ;
And who will finish what He has begun,
And show the universe that not in vain
He bled and died to save a race undone !
His mighty hand will rive Death's iron chain,
And raise His slumbering saints, with Him to live and reign !

LXXIX.

What though their dust, confined not to the grave,
Float in the clouds that hover in the air ;
Roll in the stream, or sparkle in the wave ;
Blush in the rose, or blanch the lily fair ;
He who observes and numbers every hair,
Still sees each particle, watches its rest,
Makes it the object of His special care,
And holds it subject to His great behest.
The dust He loves shall rise, in fadeless beauty dressed !

LXXX.

Doubt we His power, or limit we His skill ?

Who doubts ? A worm ; or, meaner still, a mite !
And doubts of whom ? Presumptuous man, be still,
And know that He is God ! Rather unite

With burning seraphs, who, with sweet delight
Mingled with awe profound, admire, adore

His wondrous works, disclosing to their sight
Depths which their powerful minds cannot explore,
And heights to which their wings, though tireless, never soar !

LXXXI.

Whom has He placed on trial, here below ?

Not merely matter frail, or deathless mind,
But man, in whom, by ties we cannot know,
Both mind and matter strangely are combined.

'Tis man that spurns His laws, though good and kind ;
Man that repents and seeks His proffered grace ;

Hence the whole man, whom law and conscience bind,
Must, in the Judgment, stand before His face,
To meet his due reward and find his proper place.

LXXXII.

Shall He, whose word could, in a moment, fill

Immensity with worlds beaming with light,
And crowned with bliss, want either power or will
On all His subjects to enforce His right ?

Sooner the universe in endless night
Will find a common grave ! The dead shall hear

His all-awakening voice, and spring to light
Radiant with hope, or stung by guilt and fear,
And to receive their doom, before His bar appear !

LXXXIII.

He who was touched with pity for our woes ;
Constrained by tender love, His blood to shed,
To cancel all our guilt ; He, surely, knows
What we have ground to hope, or cause to dread.
He wishes to pour blessings on our head,
Nor startle from our eyes a causeless tear ;
Then listen calmly to what He has said :
Not merely those who kill the body, fear ;
Their power and rage are short, and soon will disappear ;

LXXXIV.

But reverence Him, who, after He has killed
And laid the body in the grave to dwell,
Has yet but partially His work fulfilled,
On those who slight His mercy and rebel ;
For He can doom to punishment in Hell
Both soul and body ; banish from His sight
The man entire, to live with demons fell,
Wrapped in the horrors of eternal night,
Where Hope can never come to shed her cheering light.

LXXXV.

No power, in finite nature, can reverse
Or disannul that firmly fixed decree,
(Involving bliss supreme, or dreadful curse,)
Which invests man with immortality.
'Tis graven on his heart, and he can see
Its characters revealed before his eyes,
If, by his sins, he will not blinded be ;
And written *on His heart*, who left the skies
To die, that guilty dust might in His image rise !

LXXXVI.

The hour is coming—who can stop its flight?—
When all that slumber in the silent grave
Shall hear His voice and rise to meet His sight,
And know that He has power to crush or save.
Some, thrilled with joy, shall palms of victory wave,
And, robed in beauty, haste to meet His smile ;
Others shall long to find some gloomy cave,
Round which the mountain rears its rocky pile,
To 'scape the eye of Him whom once they did revile !

LXXXVII.

O man ! why wish it otherwise ? Why hope
The grave will end thy being ? Why desire
A few brief moments, madly here to grope
Thy way to utter death ? Why feed that fire
Of life, so soon in darkness to expire ?
'Tis scarcely worth thy care, if such thy lot !
Hope, hope thou art a brute ! Rather aspire
To what thou art, immortal, dearly bought ;
Lost, but, by grace divine with yearning pity sought !

LXXXVIII.

Oh ! is it not enough, frail as thou art,
Bound to the tomb, and longing to find rest ;
Oh ! is it not enough to cheer thy heart
And win thy love, to know thou *may'st* be blest ?
To feel that, though with care and grief oppressed,
And sorely burdened, and assailed by fears
Of greater woes, in deepening horrors dressed,
Thou *may'st* obtain a home where flow no tears,
A life of bliss prolonged through Heaven's eternal years ?

LXXXIX.

Or would'st thou rather feel thyself allied
To the frail insect sporting on the wing,
While the day lasts, and swept at even-tide
Into the pool or lake, (ephemeral thing!)
Seek'st thou the face of Terror's dreadful King,
As the last boon that Heaven will bestow?
O rather seek from Death to pluck his sting!
Transient, indeed, thy temporal bliss, or woe;
But endless joy or grief thou soon wilt surely know!

XC.

Poor, sorrowing mother, weeping o'er the form
Of darling babe, for its last slumber dressed;
What shall sustain thee while the wrathful storm
Beats on thy head? O! thou art sore distressed;
For, one whom thou hast tenderly caressed,
And kindly soothed and watched with anxious care,
Is rudely sundered from thy yearning breast!
Death bends enamoured o'er that brow so fair,
And twines his fingers cold with its soft, clustering hair.

XCI.

Look not so sorrowful! There is a shore,
Warmed by a sun that sheds no parting rays;
Where blighted flowers, transplanted, bloom once more,
With hues on which delighted angels gaze,
And where are never heard those mournful lays
That tell of sundered hearts and broken ties.
There bliss is measured not by fleeting days
And gloomy nights. 'Tis lasting as the skies!
Mother, to that bright world thy babe shall surely rise!

XCII.

Lov'st thou the Saviour ? Thou shalt meet again
Thy darling one, and not, as now, all pale
And lifeless ; nor exposed to sickness, pain
And death ; woes that, in time's dark vale,
Our dearest friends oft suddenly assail ;
But youthful, vigorous, beautiful, replete
With all that gives pure joys that cannot fail !
Do hopes like these awaken transports sweet ?
Then bow, in grateful love, low at your Saviour's feet !

XCIII.

Think what it cost to sweeten the last sleep
Of dust so precious, and again restore
One whose untimely loss thou now dost weep !
Think what thy Saviour in the garden bore,
And on the cross, to open wide the door
Of immortality to thee and thine !
How canst thou fail to wonder and adore !
Shall that loved form in glorious beauty shine ?
O ! spurn not Him whose blood purchased this boon divine !

XCIV.

Fear not thy priceless treasure to commit
To its own mother earth ; for angels bright
Will know the sacred spot, and near it sit,
Or, poised on silver wings, with sweet delight
Will watch its peaceful slumber day and night ;
And yet a mightier Guardian will be near,
Who of His own bought gem will ne'er lose sight !
Then wipe away, at once, that mournful tear !
Thy babe that sleeps shall wake, and live in holier sphere.

XCV.

Plant choicest flowers upon the little mound
That marks its resting-place. When chilling frost
Shall bind in rigid fetters all the ground,
And blight their petals, in the cold winds tossed,
They will remind thee of what thou hast lost,—
A sweeter flower, nipped by Death's icy hand ;
A sad reverse, that many a fond hope crossed,
And showed earth's joys are built upon the sand !
No bliss, but that from Heaven, on solid rock doth stand !

XCVI.

And when returning Spring her visit pays
To the loved spot where now thy treasure lies,
Sheds on thy withered plants her genial rays,
And bids them from their wintry slumber rise ;
Thou wilt look up, joy beaming in thine eyes,
And hail that glorious and eternal Spring,
Which fills with perfect bliss the upper skies ;
Feel that the sod covers no blighted thing,
But plant that yet will bloom, and sweetest fragrance fling !

XCVII.

O sister ! lately like the blushing rose,
But now, alas ! like drooping lily pale,
Thy transient life is hastening to a close ;
Soon thou wilt cross that dark and cheerless vale
Which oft has caused the stoutest hearts to quail ;
Yet thou art calm. Thy meek and thoughtful eye
Sees nothing there thy courage to assail ;
But angel forms in beauty hover nigh,
And He, at whose command these guardian spirits fly.

XCVIII.

A pleasant convoy and a faithful guide
Await thy coming. Where the shadowy land
Reveals its gloomy border stretching wide,
With tender love and radiant smiles they stand,
And, stretching out a kind, inviting hand,
Whisper: Sweet sister, come; Oh! come away!
Celestial light beams from the waiting band,
Converting Death's dark valley into day;
While stealing on thine ear comes Heaven's own melody.

XCIX.

Fear not to drop that robe, that once so fair,
Seemed dipped in colours bright as Eden's flowers;
But now, is faded quite beyond repair,
Like the seared leaves that rustle in the bowers,
And quivering fall when Autumn tempest lowers;
For thou shalt deck thee in that robe again,
Restamped with colours lasting as the hours
That cheer the hearts of those who know no pain;
In perfect beauty dressed, shalt with thy Saviour reign.

C.

Aged and tottering Pilgrim, sorely pressed
By burdening years, thy step is sad and slow;
The silent eve brings thee no balmy rest;
The spirit-stirring morn's enlivening glow
Seems but to waken deeper sense of woe;
Thine eyes are dim; thine ears no longer hail
The soothing tones that from sweet voices flow;
Thy nerves are shattered all; thy senses fail;
Thou would'st be young, perchance, but wishes nought avail!

CI.

Well thou rememberest now ; and it is sweet
For trembling age to live upon the past ;
Thou dost remember when thy nimble feet
Traversed the mead, or scaled the mountain vast,
Or when, upon the tall and giddy mast,
The sport of angry billows tossing high,
Thou, by thine arm of strength, could'st hold thee fast ;
When thou could'st hear even the zephyr's sigh,
And when the blazing sun scarce dimmed thy sparkling eye.

CII.

Thou hast, perhaps, been foremost in the field
Of deadly strife ; and gathered laurels green,
From soil enriched with tears and blood ; or pealed,
On thousand ears listening with interest keen,
The tones of fervid eloquence ; or seen,
Through Galilean tube, in splendour roll
Worlds that illumine Night's empire, with a sheen
That spreads a mimic day, from pole to pole ;
But ah ! these scenes are past ; a dream appears the whole !

CIII.

And let them pass ! why cherish one desire
To bring them back ? Hast thou not yet in store
Something far better ? Wilt thou not aspire
To scenes more permanent ? Look up, explore,
If on thought's vigorous pinions thou canst soar
To such sublimity ; look up and see
Thyself arrayed in fadeless youth once more ;
Scaling the mountains of eternity,
With heart unawed by fear, and footstep bounding free !

CIV.

O yes! that form constrained by age to bow,
Shall stand erect, arrayed in beauty bright;
That eye, bedimmed and almost sightless now,
Shall sweep Heaven's blooming landscape with delight.
That ear, that oft for many a weary night
Has sought in vain for sounds to soothe to sleep,
Shall hear sweet music, and that hand whose might
Is gone, the chords of golden harp shall sweep.
Sad pilgrim, dry thy tears! Thou hast no cause to weep!

CV.

Thou dear, domestic hearth, around whose fire
Loved friends once gathered, whose affections all
Breathed music soft, as that from angel's lyre;
'Tis sweet, thy precious image to recall.
Whatever else may on my memory pall,
Most dear thy recollections still remain!
But O! as fairest flowers must blighted fall,
When envious Winter spreads her chilling reign,
Thy joyous scenes are gone, ne'er to return again!

CVI.

And yet, ye still seem present to my sight,
Clad in the freshness of the years long fled.
I see my native home, and with delight
Hear voices sweet; see looks benign that shed
Balm on a heart that oft with grief has bled.
Brothers and sisters greet me with a smile,
As if they had from higher regions sped,
To give me their sweet converse for a while,
And all my wayward thoughts and sickening cares beguile.

CVII.

Welcome, kind visitants ; your winning smiles
And gentle looks tell wherefore ye are here.
Ye whisper of a hope that ne'er beguiles ;
Ye point me to a pure and glorious sphere,
Where sickness, pain and death never appear ;
Where blissful bowers in fadeless verdure bloom,
And life's deep river flows for ever clear ;
Bright scenes, on which no cloud shall shed its gloom ;
Friendships, whose bliss divine no future shall entomb.

CVIII.

But who is this among your joyful band,
Whom, by your looks, ye seem to hold most dear,
And who regards your love with aspect bland ?
Receive, blest shade, the tribute of a tear !
My mother, 'tis thy form that hovers near.
No eye but thine could beam so mildly bright ;
No smile but thine so winning could appear.
O ! tell me why, revealed in living light,
A thousand forms of love come stealing on my sight ?

CIX.

Yes, it is thou, who with maternal love
Didst o'er my cradle bend ; breathing forth there
Thy warm petitions to the throne above,
To bless the gift committed to thy care,
And guard it from the wily Tempter's snare ;
Nor were thy supplications all in vain,
Or merely poured upon the senseless air ;
But priceless blessings followed in their train.
They bound my heart to Heaven, by love's enduring chain.

CX.

T'was thy warm heart that first awakened mine,
To know the joys immortal Hope can bring;
Else, I had been, well do my thoughts divine,
A moral wreck, a scathed and blighted thing,
A moth that in the flame has scorched its wing !
Of thee I learned to reverence Him who died
To conquer Death, and rob him of his sting ;
To look beyond Jordan's dark, swelling tide,
And hail a better land spread out in beauty wide.

CXI.

Then welcome to my sight, thou much loved form,
Summoned by Fancy from the treasured past !
If thus thine *image* can my bosom warm
With kindling transport ; O ! when met, at last,
In yonder blissful world, where each rude blast
Is hushed for ever, where the crystal stream
Of Life rolls from the Throne its current vast ;
How rapturous will thy *real presence* seem !
How sweet to know and feel it is not all a dream !

CANTO X.

THE COMMISSION.



CANTO X.

THE COMMISSION.

ANALYSIS.

Apostrophe to Self-Denial.—Last interview of the Saviour with His disciples, on the Mount of Olives.—Angels and glorified spirits invisible spectators of the scene.—Address of the Saviour to His disciples.—Commissions them to publish the terms of Salvation to all men.—Describes the opposition that will be made to their message by various classes, and the trials that await them.—Assures them of His presence and assistance.—Promises them the aid of the Holy Spirit to insure success, and encourages them by the hope of a glorious reward.—The Millennium.—Triumphant hymn of the attendant spirits.—The Ascension.—Responsive choirs at the gates of Heaven.—The Saviour on His throne.—The worship of the Heavenly Hosts.



SELF-DENIAL.

VIRTUE sublime, making thy home on earth,
And never seen in higher, holier sphere,
And yet, most clearly of celestial birth,
How kind and healthful is thine influence here !
Sad were our lot did not thy presence cheer
Life's gloomy vale ! Where thou dost make thy stay,
Flowers spring and blossom even in deserts drear ;
Fruits are produced that suffer no decay ;
Darkness gives place to light that sheds no transient ray.

And yet without the sympathizing train
Of all thy sister Virtues, to uphold,
Strengthen and guide and solace thee in pain,
Thine arm were nerveless and thy bosom cold.
Nought but their cheering aid can make thee bold.

But O! when Faith full on thy ravished sight
Reveals a treasure richer far than gold,
And hope proclaims, with calm and sweet delight,
That treasure all thine own, who can resist thy might?

Despising wealth and luxury and ease,
Then thou canst pierce the wilderness, or scale
The rugged mount, or brave the stormy seas.
Then, should woes thicken, grievous foes assail,
Whose dread assaults would make the stoutest quail,
Thou, like a rock amidst the waves canst stand,
Fired by a courage never known to fail;
Proof against Persecution's iron hand,
And all the nameless woes Oppression can command.

Who can describe the trophies thou hast won!
Trophies to others bloodless, not to thee!
'Twere easier from the heavens to blot the sun
Than to conceal thy course of victory.
Lives there a man from foul oppression free?
Lives there a man whose soul has burst the chain
Of moral servitude, and who can see
Beyond this state of darkness, toil and pain,
A fairer, brighter world where joys immortal reign?

He is thy debtor. Thou hast nobly braved
Flood, fire and torture to secure his right.
On every field of suffering thou hast waved
Thy glorious banner; flinging to the light
Its snowy folds, and daring the rude fight,
While armed with Patience, Faith and Love alone!
Yet, thou hast triumphed over all the might
That wicked men and cruel fiends have shown!
Thy victories have been hailed by angels round the throne!

Led by sweet Charity, thou hast explored
The crowded lanes and alleys, where are found
The victims of disease and want; hast poured
The balm of consolation on the wound
Of many a sufferer steeped in woes profound;

Or, shrinking from no toil, hast pierced the cold,
Damp, cheerless dungeon underneath the ground,
To bless with something better far than gold,
Earth's most degraded sons in misery grown old !

O ! thou hast formed acquaintanceship with pain !
Earth has few griefs that thou hast not endured,
Not for the sake of pleasure, ease, or gain,
Nor by the witching bait of Fame allured ;
These are but fleeting trifles when procured ;
But to relieve the wretched and forlorn,
And lead to virtue those to vice inured ;
For these hast thou encountered pain and scorn,
And merited the thanks of millions yet unborn !

When, at our pleasure, through the fields we roam ;
Or tread the forest path exempt from fear ;
Or seek repose in our own peaceful home,
Feeling that no dread foe is hovering near ;
Or read the Sacred page in which appear
Sublimest truths to cheer the fainting soul,
'Mid scenes and objects often dark and drear ;
When on our sight Heaven's blissful visions roll,
May we remember thee, whose toils secured the whole !

I.

On Olive's verdant top now stands revealed
A form, on which enraptured seraphs gaze ;
'Tis He whose mighty hand the tomb unsealed,
And poured into its depths Life's cheering rays.
Still to His joyful followers He displays
His welcome presence and His tender love ;
Still His return to highest Heaven delays,
Their knowledge of His counsels to improve ;
But soon to reascend and fill His throne above.

II.

The angelic hosts and saints enrobed in white,
Safely returned from their excursion wide
Through distant worlds, where, with intense delight,
They had proclaimed the reign of Him who died
For guilty man, now, ranged on every side,
Are waiting for the signal to be given
Which calls them to attend the Crucified,
And swell the pomp of His ascent to Heaven.
They seem like gorgeous clouds that gild the approach of
even.

III.

Not seen, indeed, by the dim eye of sense,
But obvious to Him whom they obey
And love to honour. O what strange events
Now fill their minds ! Not far away,
They see the very garden, where He lay
In deepest agony, pressed by the weight
Of wrath divine ; the hill of Calvary,
On which he realized so dire a fate ;
And His late home, the tomb, cold, dark, and desolate !

IV.

Now, on these scenes they gaze, with kindling eye
And glowing heart ; and now, with transport sweet,
They look upon their Sovereign standing nigh,
In whose mysterious, glorious person meet
Wonders ineffable ! Oft they repeat
His sufferings and His triumphs. Oft they try
To fathom depths which all their powers defeat ;
Amazed that He, who on a cross did die,
Reigns o'er unnumbered worlds, and fills immensity !

V.

This is the Saviour's parting interview
With those whom He had chosen to proclaim,
With glowing zeal, not merely to a few,
But to the world, the glories of His name ;
Make known the gracious end for which He came
From Heaven to earth, suffered and freely died.
Having endured the cross, despised the shame,
And flung the doors of mercy open wide,
He now would send them forth as heralds from His side.

VI.

Who can conceive the love, the tenderness,
With which He now regards them, while they stand
Waiting to hear from Him His last address,
And prompt to welcome His supreme command !
How solemn the occasion, and how grand
The events that from this moment will arise,
And spread their influence wide through every land !
Events to startle Hell with dread surprise,
And fill the upper world with sweetest melodies !

VII.

Here is a little band unknown to Fame ;
Indulging no desire her smiles to greet ;
And yet her loudest trumpet shall proclaim
Their future deeds, in tones divinely sweet.
Like Atalanta, Fame has nimble feet ;
Most that pursue her, useless find the chase ;
She leaves them far behind, however fleet ;
While many that would gladly shun her face,—
Shrinking from her bright eyes,—are clasped in her embrace.

VIII.

With mingled joy and sorrow, which defy
Pen to describe or pencil to portray ;
Blending the tear-drop quivering in the eye,
With the sweet smile, that, like the blush of day,
Illumes the glowing features ; they survey
Their Master's visage, while these accents mild
From lips of heavenly wisdom find their way,
Like gushing stream from fountain undefiled,
Poured forth to bless and cheer the barren desert wild.

IX.

The moment now approaches, when your eyes
Will cease to greet my presence ; when your ears
Will hear my voice, no more ! Down from the skies,
Where angels shine in their exalted spheres,
And bliss is measured, not by fleeting years,
But by the life of Him who reigns above,
I came an exile to a vale of tears,
To execute the purposes of Love,
And show to sinful men how kind their God can prove !

X.

My work is done. My errand is fulfilled.
You see my humble form ; 'tis like your own.
'Tis human nature. Oft has it been thrilled
With anguish keen, such as was never known
To any heart but mine ! Who leaves a throne
For poverty and toil, prolonged for years ;
A bed of down for one with nettles strewn ;
Consummate bliss for agonies and tears ;
Yes, all the heart can love, for all it hates or fears !

XI.

This I have done, most freely; and for whom?
 For friends? For those whose love but echoed mine?
 No! but for enemies! To avert their doom,
 To rescue them from punishment condign;
 In human nature, joined to the divine,
 A full atonement have I made for man,
 And caused sweet Mercy on his path to shine!
 Wisdom, impelled by love, contrived the plan,—
 A love whose vast abyss no finite mind can scan!

XII.

'Twas mine to bleed, to gain this glorious end;
 And now, by just desert, 'tis mine to reign.
 I go to meet my Father and my Friend;
 Not to be wickedly maligned again,
 Or feel the scourge, or bear the cross of pain;
 But with transcendent glory to be crowned,
 And hailed with rapture by the shining train
 Of saints and seraphs, meekly gathered round,
 To welcome home their Prince, with love and awe profound.

XIII.

I leave the world, but love its welfare still;
 I leave my flock, but shall for ever bear
 Their interests on my heart; ever fulfil
 My pledge to make them my peculiar care!
 Ye, who have oft been privileged to share
 My presence and my counsels, be not grieved
 To think of parting; yield not to despair!
 Confide in me, in whom ye have believed,
 And who, o'er Death, for you, have victory achieved!

XIV.

I chose you, not to give you a release
From poverty and trial, toil and pain ;
Your temporal ease, or wealth, or rank increase,
Or cause you over cringing slaves to reign ;—
All worldly greatness is but poor and vain,—
But, to promote the end for which I died ;
To burst asunder sin's appalling chain ;
To tell the guilty nations, far and wide,
That from my dreadful cross flows mercy's healing tide.

XV.

Shall Heaven, at the expense of blood and tears,
Make full provision for a race undone,
And that through all of time's revolving years ;
And shall this rich provision not be known
To those for whom such tender love is shown ?
Shall He, whom angels worshipped with delight,
Impelled by love, leave His exalted throne,
And bleed and die, and wrap Himself in night ;
And then shall all His toils and tears prove useless quite ?

XVI.

No ! ye must publish what your Lord has done,
To purchase pardon for a guilty race ;
And that to every land beneath the sun !
Go and proclaim abroad, in every place,
The terms on which the guilty shall find grace !
Say to each tribe and tongue, in every clime,
However guilty, and however base,
That Heaven is moved for man with love sublime,
And publishes release from sorrow and from crime.

XVII.

He that repents, believes, obeys my word,
Relies upon my death to find release
From the dread penalty by sin incurred,
And leaves the path of ruin, shall find peace.
To him the threatenings of the law shall cease,
And I will own him as an heir of Heaven ;
But he who disbelieves, whose sins increase,
And who will not accept of mercy even,
Shall feel the second death, and never be forgiven !

XVIII.

Who will not eat, must pine with hunger still ;
Who will not drink, must still remain athirst ;
Who will not trust the kind physician's skill,
When with a fierce distemper sorely cursed,
Invites his fell disease to do its worst ;
Who will not see, must still continue blind ;
Who will not have the penalty reversed,
Annexed to violated laws, must find
The penalty he braves, and feel 'tis not unkind.

XIX.

Who will not seek a shelter that is nigh,
And offers from the storm a safe retreat,
But chooses every peril to defy,
Must, when the storm arrives, its horrors meet,
Its rushing floods, its cold and pelting sleet ;
Nor has he any reason to complain,
While on his head clouds burst and thunders beat ;
'Tis his own choice. Thus guilt and folly reign,
In him who hears the terms of life and peace in vain !

XX.

He spurns the only means which can prevent
A doom already merited. He brings
On his own head that fearful punishment,
Most plainly threatened by the King of kings,
Against the disobedient. He flings
Salvation from him, as a thing of nought.
Mercy has done with him. She spreads her wings,
Shedding warm tears for one so vainly sought,
And leaves him to his course, with hopeless ruin fraught.

XXI.

Your message, then, involves both life and death ;
Life, not like that confined to this low sphere,
Feeble and transient as the zephyr's breath ;
Scarcely commenced, when made to disappear ;
Replete with labour, pain, and anxious fear ;
But destined to survive the insatiate tomb,
And permanent as heaven's eternal year ;
And Death that wraps the soul in hopeless gloom,
And makes remorse, despair, its everlasting doom !

XXII.

That such a message, one that thus presents
Alternative, whose weight no finite mind
Can duly estimate, should give offence,
And e'en a stubborn opposition find,
Though urged in terms affectionate and kind,
Is strange indeed. O how perversely bent
On utter ruin ; how completely blind,
To spurn the offers Heaven in love has sent,
To save rebellious worms from fearful punishment !

XXIII.

Can the lorn traveller in the desert drear,
Fatigued and thirsty, foolishly despise,
While horrid death apparently is near,
The cooling fount gushing before his eyes?
Can he who helpless on the cold earth lies,
Faint, sick and dying, spurn the generous friend
That, moved by pity, to his succour flies?
And O! can man, exposed to dreadful end,
Dash from his lips the cup that Mercy doth extend?

XXIV.

Yes: in despite of reason, conscience, all
That should awaken hope or startle fear,
With one consent men will reject your call,
And never listen with obedient ear,
Till summoned at the Judgment to appear;
Unless some power, more mighty than your own,
Incline their hearts to hold your message dear.
Till then will tyrant Sin maintain his throne,
And lead them to pursue the path of death alone.

XXV.

This they will do, because their hearts are wrong,
And not because impelled or urged by fate.
Their own desires will hurry them along
Destruction's path, until it is too late
To seek repentance, and avoid the state
Of banishment eternal from the skies.
Leading a sinful life, they but create
Fiercer temptations, blind still more the eyes,
And clothe with deadlier power the worm that never dies.

XXVI.

Hence,—left without kind influence from above,—
They all, with one consent, will make excuse ;
Refuse to listen to the claims of love ;
And treat your message as of little use,
And e'en, perhaps, assail it with abuse.
All will oppose it, from the heart ; and yet,
From various causes which are not abstruse,
In various ways your message will be met,
By those of different tastes whom different sins beset.

XXVII.

Some will contend they need no other light
To guide them safely in the path of bliss,
Than that which Nature pours upon their sight,
From all her works ; and yet that path they miss !
Like Judas, who betrayed me with a kiss,
They hail the light of Nature with applause,
As making plain the path of happiness ;
And then, without a single moment's pause,
Betray the light they boast by trampling on its laws !

XXVIII.

The light of Nature, in a holy heart,
Would doubtless foster every pure desire ;
But something more than Nature must impart,
To hearts like theirs, devotion's hallowed fire !
What has she done for them ? Do they aspire
To inward purity, to holy zeal,
To praise like that which flows from angel's lyre ?
If they her heavenly influence never feel,
From whence infer her power to serve the common weal ?

XXIX.

Does Nature plainly tell them to adore
A senseless block, shaped by the skilful hand
Of architect ; and costly offerings pour
On Altars dedicate to sun and moon ; and stand
Offering sweet incense, in some temple grand,
To beasts and birds, fishes and reptiles vile,—
To all that cut the deep or roam the land ?
Or does she teach them, with contemptuous smile,
To drown the shrieks of those burned on the funeral pile ?

XXX.

But grant that Nature teaches what is right,
And friendly warning gives against the wrong ;
What if her lessons are neglected quite,
And treated as a fable, or a song,
Not by a few, but by a countless throng ?
Can Nature tell them how to find release
From penalties that to her laws belong ;
Can she, when conscience thunders, whisper peace ?
No ! she can then condemn, and there her teachings cease !

XXXI.

How prone are men on broken staff to lean !
Oft they who talk of Nature scarce can tell,
Or even form conjecture what they mean.
Nature is not a block, or demon fell,
Or some invisible and dreadful spell,
That binds the universe in iron chain ;
But God, pervading earth and Heaven and Hell,
Denouncing fearful wrath and endless pain
On rebels who refuse to recognize His reign !

XXXII.

Can those who are polluted and debased
By hearts estranged from rectitude ; arraigned
As guilty criminals who have defaced
Their Maker's bright and holy image ; chained
For execution ; can they, when constrained
By conscience to reflect, find peace serene
In God, as sovereign ? Can they, with unfeigned
And joyful trust, upon *His* bosom lean,
Before whose searching eyes the Heavens are not clean ?

XXXIII.-

O ! not in God, as in creation seen,
And seen in Providence ; in the dark cloud,
Streaked red and pierced by lightning's dazzling sheen,
And pealing on the ear its thunders loud ;
Or seen in bed of sickness, or the shroud,
Or coffin filled with cold and senseless clay ;
Or in the grave, whither whole nations crowd,
Does man behold revealed one welcome ray
To light his darkling path, or drive his fears away !

XXXIV.

But God in Christ, God clothed in human form,
Toiling, enduring, bleeding for lost man
Exposed by sin to wrath's eternal storm ;
God, shining in redemption's glorious plan,
Like that ethereal bow oft sent to span
The lurid heavens and show the storm has fled,
Speaks love and peace, removes the dreadful ban
That closes Heaven, raises the drooping head,
Proffers eternal life, through blood on Calvary shed !

XXXV.

No light so cheering, to the fainting soul
Stung with remorse and threatened with despair ;
Startled to hear Sinai's dread thunders roll,
And see its lightnings flashing through the air,
Like the swift-flying meteor's dreadful glare ;
As Bethlehem's star, bursting the gloom of night,
Beaming upon the eye, divinely fair,
And filling the grieved heart with sweet delight !
Who close their eyes on this, are wrapped in darkness quite !

XXXVI.

Others will plead that sin does not require
Vicarious atonement ; that the law,
Broken by sinful deed or wrong desire,
Merely demands repentance ; that the flaw
Made in that golden chain, designed to draw
The immortal spirit near the Source of bliss,
Is thus repaired. Wondrous, indeed, the awe
Prest on the soul by such a view as this !
Who, by such motives urged, the path of life can miss !

XXXVII.

What injury, to either man or God,
Can penitence, however deep, repair ?
What though her eyes should weep a boundless flood,
Her heart be pressed with loads of grief and care,
And her strong cries of anguish fill the air ;
Can she restore to life a father dead,
Bid desolate and mourning orphans share
Again the love and kindness of their head ?
Tears cannot wash away the blood unjustly shed !

XXXVIII.

Will blooming flowers, plucked by a ruthless hand,

Destined in utter wantonness to die,

Again erect their heads, and smiling stand

To court the gaze of each admiring eye,

Merely because a deep and mournful sigh

Bursts from the lips of him that laid them low ?

Or will fair forms that in the cold earth lie,

Smitten to the dust by some unfeeling foe,

Live, when repentant tears from cruel eyes shall flow ?

XXXIX.

No penitence but that which never ends

Atones for injuries that never cease !

The grief that now the guilty bosom rends,

For opening founts of woe that will increase

For ever, looks in vain for solid peace,

While from these founts the bitter waters flow ;

Unless the sufferer find a sweet release

From guilt, through Him who deigned to undergo

That load, which else had sunk a world in endless woe !

XL.

God also has His rights. These are withheld

By acts of disobedience to His sway.

Are they restored, when those who have rebelled

Strive by their tears to wash their guilt away ?

By their example they have led astray

Others, perhaps, or by persuasive speech

Seduced them Heaven's laws to disobey.

Whatever lessons now their tears may teach,

Those whom they have destroyed are lost beyond their reach !

XLI.

They have pursued a path, which, if pursued
By all the subjects of the Eternal King,
Would leave His Throne in utter solitude !
In vain o'er thousand worlds His arm might fling
Unnumbered blessings ! Not a voice would sing,
With warm and filial love, His lofty praise !
In Heaven itself rebellion's shout would ring :
Angels no more on scenes of bliss would gaze ;
All joy and hope would die in sin's consuming blaze !

XLII.

Can injuries tending to results like these
Be ever cancelled or repaired by tears ?
No ! should they fall, till swelled to mighty seas,
'Twere useless quite ! The stain of sin appears,—
To Him whose eye surveys eternal years,
With their results,—so horrid, dark and deep,
So fraught with all to awaken deadly fears,
That if the universe itself could weep,
'Twere vain, in all its tears, this fearful stain to steep !

XLIII.

They who proclaim repentance as the ground
Of pardon for all those who disobey,
Among true penitents are never found ;
For they would wrest the rights of Heaven away,
And seat the Eternal on a throne of clay !
'Tis a mere peccadillo, they contend,
From reason, truth and right to go astray !
How can such views of Him whom they offend,
To their reluctant grief real contrition lend ?

XLIV.

Genuine repentance, from a sense of sin,
As inconceivably deserving hate
And punishment, polluting all within
And all without, and making desolate
A spirit formed for an eternal state
Of purity and bliss ; repentance true,
Which feels that sin deserves a better fate ;
Acknowledges that nought but death is due ;
Resolves, whate'er betide, all evil to eschew ;

XLV.

Repentance, such as this, prepares the way
For Him whose precepts have been set at nought,
His mercy, through the atonement, to display ;
Because the offender now, at length, is brought
To yield to God submission, as he ought ;
He who delights in mercy thus forgives.
O ! not by groans or tears is pardon bought ;
'Tis by atoning blood the rebel lives ;
All substitutes for that are wretched palliatives !

XLVI.

Alas ! could man's repentance aught avail,
To wash, of sin, the deep and crimson stain,
And on the lost the hope of Heaven entail,
Your Master's sorrows were endured in vain !
Useless entirely was the dreadful pain
Inflicted by the scourge, the thorny crown,
The cross, on which suspended He was slain !
O ! more than useless was Heaven's awful frown,
Which, resting on His soul, crushed Him in anguish down !

XLVII.

Let not those guilty ones, who, in the sight
Of Him whose eyes all hearts with care survey,
Are quite polluted, venture thus to slight
The only fountain that can wash away
Their sad defilement, lest they rue the day
Which made them candidates for bliss or woe!
What madness, from all peace and hope to stray!
Would that, while Mercy pleads, they could but know
What can alone prevent their final overthrow!

XLVIII.

Others will pertinaciously maintain
That strict morality embraces all
That Heaven requires. Such persons hope to gain
Eternal life by yielding to the call
Of moral duties. E'en if they should fall,
Sometimes, below their views of what is right,
And get involved in fierce temptation's thrall,
Their virtuous deeds, they think, Heaven will requite,
And leave their evil ones entirely out of sight!

XLIX.

They, by their views and conduct, plainly show
That, in their estimation, He who reigns
In Heaven above has slight concern below,
And scarcely any government maintains
Among His subjects here; and hence, their pains
To lead a moral life do not proceed
From love to Him, or that which He ordains,
But from respect for duties, which can plead
Custom, or public law; civil, or social need.

L.

But what avails that cold morality
Which yields to civil government its rights,
And yet, with wondrous inconsistency,
The laws of Heaven's eternal Sovereign slights!
Even the bee instinctively delights
To yield a prompt obedience to its queen;
The ravenous wolf with brother wolf unites,
To hunt the prey that quells his hunger keen;
Respect for civil laws is in the ant-hill seen!

LI.

And what avail parental, filial love,
Affections forming tender, social ties,
While that Paternal Power, who dwells above,
Is quite excluded from these sympathies?
What though the mother's heart beams in her eyes
When she beholds her infant's budding charms;
What though the indulgent father vainly tries
To check the emotion which his bosom warms,
Whene'er the boy he loves comes rushing to his arms!

LII.

Even the beasts that roam the forests wild
Disclose the same attachments! They can feel
Affection for their offspring! They are mild
And kind to them! Often do they reveal
Their love in forms to melt a heart of steel!
But is there moral goodness in this love,
Which, for reward, to Heaven can make appeal?
Or can parental, filial duty, prove
He is not still a wretch who slights the God above?

LIII.

It is, indeed, delightful to behold
Children obedient, submissive, kind,
And not morose, or impudently bold ;
Much less to every filial duty blind ;
It is a most refreshing sight, to find
Children thus dutiful to those who rear
And cherish them, by nought but love inclined.
But there's another Parent ever near !
O ! shall they yield to Him no gratitude or fear ?

LIV.

'Tis sad to think that those whose hearts are warm
With kind affections to their friends below,
Are cold, as chiselled marble's senseless form,
To Him who feels for them a warmer glow
Of generous love than they can ever know ;
Who oft has wept for them, and freely died
To save them from a world of hopeless woe !
No friend like Him, throughout creation wide ;
Yet, when He claims their love, they thrust His claims aside !

LV.

Others will tell you that they are not dead
In trespasses and sins ; that there is still,
Like seed that's covered in the earth's cold bed,
Some spiritual life in them, which needs but skill
And fostering care to rise and grow, and fill
The air with fragrance, and sweet fruits produce ;
That such result depends upon their will ;
That if of this they make a proper use,
They'll gain from Heaven rewards and compliments profuse !

LVI.

But if One died for all, as they confess,
Then all are dead, and dead must still remain ;
Unless the One who died, their souls to bless,
Shall speak in love and bid them live again.
I am the resurrection ; and in vain
Shall any hope for life, except from me ;
My hand alone can break the accursed chain
Of Death, and set the ruined captive free !
Who look to other help, true life can never see !

LVII.

To cultivate with diligence and care,
And toil incessant, year succeeding year,
A tree that nought but bitter fruits can bear,
Must, to a mind that can reflect, appear
Buying sad products, at a price too dear.
The tree itself a change must undergo,
To effect the end desired. Else it is clear,
That, after all the efforts we bestow,
Nothing but worthless fruits will on its branches grow !

LVIII.

Do all men cherish, towards the Eternal King,
A love supreme ? By nature, do they all
Prefer His claims to every other thing
That would from Him their homage due recall ?
Or, is their love to Him so very small
That, like the buried seed, it dormant lies,
Or, like some prisoner bound, is held in thrall ?
Love, not supreme, to Him who rules the skies,
Is too minute for sight, even by the Omniscient's eyes !

LIX.

The heart possessed of but a single spark
Of holy love, to either God or man,
Could not repress or keep it in the dark,
When once informed of that stupendous plan
Of grace divine, which angels cannot scan,
And which they celebrate with golden lyres.
Such news this spark, did it exist, would fan
Into a flame of pure and wrapped desires,
Which scarce would be surpassed by e'en a Seraph's fires!

LX.

No love, no! not a spark of real love,
Lives in that heart that cold and dead remains,
In view of facts which called from Heaven above,
The angel choirs to pour their choicest strains
Of glowing rapture o'er the star-lit plains
Of Bethlehem; proclaiming Peace, Good Will,
To guilty man, exposed to endless pains!
Love! love to God! and yet, not feel a thrill
Of gratitude to Him who died on Calvary's Hill!

LXI.

There will be some who will profess assent
To your instructions; say that they believe;
Will e'en defend, with solid argument,
The truth which by profession they receive;
And yet, this faith of theirs will not achieve
Their liberation from the fearful might
Of sin, or lead them o'er its woes to grieve.
Such faith as this, which knows, but spurns the right,
Leaves the lost soul, at last, wrapped in a deeper night!

LXII.

Belief of bread no hunger can appease ;
Of water pure and cool, no thirst can slake ;
Of rest from pain, can minister no ease
To the poor martyr suffering at the stake !
The hungry soul the Bread of Life must take,
From Him who freely offers it, and eat ;
The thirsty soul must application make
To Life's pure stream, and drink its waters sweet ;
The suffering soul must find rest at the Saviour's feet !

LXIII.

Alas ! what crimson guilt must fix its stain
On him who knows the right, and does it not ;
Believes, and can by argument maintain
That God is good, beyond a Seraph's thought ;
Yet feels no love to Him ; believes he's bought,
By precious blood, from sin and death and Hell ;
Yet, his Redeemer's glory never sought ;
Believes his heart with gratitude should swell,
To One so good, so kind ; yet ventures to rebel !

LXIV.

Believes the world is but an empty show,
A baseless shadow, soon to pass away ;
Yet all his best affections can bestow
On its poor trifles, hastening to decay ;
Believes that nought but Heaven can display
A treasure worthy of a deathless mind ;
Yet, coldly, from that treasure turns away,
And seeks the food of moths and rust to find !
He says, indeed, he sees, but O ! how sadly blind !

LXV.

In modes and forms and ceremonial rites,
And schemes of polity many will rest;
Forgetting, that the Holy One delights
More in the filial love that rules the breast,
Than in the mode in which it is expressed,
And hates all modes of worship ever known,
Not e'en excepting those which are the best,
Where genuine love to Him is never shown!
Vain, without this, the pomp, the organ's solemn tone!

LXVI.

Does the Eternal look on outward show,
With admiration and intense delight; -
On gold that glitters, splendid lamps that glow;
Altars with gems that flash upon the sight,
Converting into day the depths of night?
Vain all external splendour and display,
And worse than vain if love be wanting quite!
His holy eye in anger turns away,
And on the broken heart sheds its benignant ray.

LXVII.

If wealth attract Him, thousand worlds are His;
If pomp, the hosts of Heaven obey His call;
If numerous golden lamps increase His bliss,
They gild the entrance to His Palace Hall.
What are those stars which, round this floating ball,
Beam with unfading lustre, scattering night,
But lamps of God? Are they not stationed all,
To guide us to His presence, by their light?
What is all human pomp compared with such a sight?

LXVIII.

Forms are not useless. All the pure desires
That swell the heart, love, veneration, zeal,
Confidence, fear, are not like secret fires,
Which, covered up, no warmth or light reveal.
Those who, on any subject deeply feel,
Will show their feelings in appropriate ways.
Surely, that wretch must have a heart of steel,
Who, in the presence of his God, betrays
No reverence for His power, His justice, or His grace !

LXIX.

Angels tread softly near the eternal throne,
And fold with reverent care their rustling wings,
Forgetful of all else but God alone ;
Or thinking of themselves as meanest things,
While holding converse with the King of kings.
And shall vile man, the creature of a day,
Whom guilt pollutes and conscience often stings,
While to His God he seeks to make his way,
By either look or deed no holy awe display ?

LXX.

Nor are religious rites to be despised,
If sanctioned by Jehovah's sovereign will.
Whatever Heaven in mercy has devised,
For human weal, men should with joy fulfill :
But when, to invent new rites, they task their skill,
And seek to impose these rites by force or fraud,
Threatening to censure, torture, burn, or kill,
All who such impositions can't applaud ;
They wrong their fellow-men, basely insult their God !

LXXI.

To multiply restrictions, duties, rules,
Say this is right and that entirely wrong,
When no authority but that of fools,
And even that cannot be pleaded long,
Is to enclose the soul in net-work strong,
Of fierce temptations, and the means provide
Of swelling lapses to a countless throng !
Thus, many from true peace have wandered wide,
Who else had useful lived, and calm and happy died.

LXXII.

Some will profess a very warm regard,
For true religion where it is possessed ;
Yet, interpose objections to retard
Its progress among those who are not blessed
Already with its means of peace and rest.
The heathen world, involved in moral night,
With superstition, crime and guilt oppressed ;
Presenting woes revolting to the sight,
Are better off, they think, without the gospel's light.

LXXIII.

O strange perverseness ! Let them not presume
To call themselves the friends of me, or mine !
Their principles would wrap the world in gloom,
To practise them should all its tribes incline !
Such selfishness no language can define !
If the great God who rules the earth and skies,
And bids through both His love and mercy shine,
Had looked on man through their bewildered eyes,
Then, on his coming night, no future morn would rise !

LXXIV.

Is that inspired Production, which contains
A revelation of God's will to man,
Made at the expense of bitter toils and pains,
Which no created intellect can scan,
Indeed, no treasure? Merits it the ban
Of interdiction, to the very race
For whom 'twas given? And is the glorious plan
Which proffers to the guilty pardoning grace,
Too mean in human hearts to find a welcome place?

LXXV.

And were the woes that filled my sorrowing heart
Wholly superfluous? Were my sufferings vain?
And did I act a foolish, stupid part,
And one that merits nothing but disdain,
When, leaving Heaven, where joys eternal reign,
I came to earth to labour, toil and bleed,
And over death itself a victory gain?
'Twas love that prompted to the wondrous deed;
And was there of that love not e'en the smallest need?

LXXVI.

They think the heathen better left to grope
Their darkened way to that eternal state
Which knows no change, reveals no cheering hope
Of peace, or pardon to the desolate!
Better to leave them ignorant of the gate,
Which mercy, at the expense of blood and tears,
Has oped to joys, which, to anticipate,
Is to behold dispelled a thousand fears,
And see benignant hope shed on all coming years!

LXXVII.

Better to leave them ! Why not better, then,
To leave the famished traveller to die
In the dark wilderness or mountain glen ;
Or close the ear against the sick man's cry,
Who, when disease glazes his sunken eye,
Implores for medicine to afford relief ;
Or, when the wintry blast shakes earth and sky,
Repel the beggar, overwhelmed with grief,
While at the door he knocks, trembling like aspen leaf ?

LXXVIII.

Better without the gospel ! Why not all,
With one accord, prefer the heathen's lot ?
If it involves no darkness to appal ;
No misery, no crimes to awaken aught
Of fearful apprehension ; if 'tis fraught
With so much blessedness, it should indeed
Excite no dread, but anxiously be sought !
And God of men had taken better heed,
Not to have given His Son, of which there was no need !

LXXIX.

Others again your message will reject,
Presuming on that mercy which they slight.
They, from His general mercy, dare expect
To stand, at last, acquitted in His sight.
They impiously declare 'twould not be right,
To doom the impenitent to endless pain,
And shroud them in a rayless, hopeless night ;
But He whose mind is neither weak nor vain,
Knows better what is right, than those who spurn His reign !

LXXX.

What Mercy gives, Mercy may well withhold.
If, to be saved from sin and endless woe
Would be to experience mercy, who so bold
As not to admit that Mercy may bestow,
Or not bestow her favours? Does God show
Mercy without a limit? What appears
His ordinary conduct here below?
When men defy all warnings and all fears,
And sacrifice their lives, does He prolong their years?

LXXXI.

Does he who daily drains the flowing bowl,
Find mercy interposing to repair
That wreck, o'er which the waves of ruin roll?
Does he who, void of prudence or of care,
Commits his body to the viewless air,
From precipice or steep, ever find
To help him, in the moment of despair,
Mercy at hand? Mercy is not thus kind!
He, then, who sports with death, is most perversely blind!

LXXXII.

In reference both to this world and the next,
Heaven tells frail mortals where their peril lies;
Nor leaves their pathway darkened and perplexed,
Unless they madly choose to close their eyes.
He, who rejects the warning, surely dies;
The guilt of suicide is on his head.
In vain too late for help he loudly cries!
When past the time that Mercy wept and plead,
Stern Justice hurls her bolts, with fiery vengeance red!

LXXXIII.

Thousands, the terms of life and peace will spurn,
From secret opposition which they feel
To duties that involve greater concern,
For God's behests and their eternal weal,
Than for those fleeting interests which appeal
To their own selfish principles within.
This preference they will studiously conceal,
Knowing themselves, that this, their choice, is sin.
Yet, O how blest that life they shudder to begin!

LXXXIV.

What is it that they, madly, thus prefer?
Pleasures that fade, to pleasures that endure;
Fame, that the hand of death will quickly slur,
To fame that shines for ever bright and pure;
Wealth, of whose gifts they cannot long be sure,
To wealth that cannot fail or pass away;
Friendships, whose charms but transiently allure,
To those whose charms can never know decay!
Alas! from peace and hope how fatally they stray!

LXXXV.

Yes; they prefer all evil to all good;
Deformity, to beauty; shade, to light;
Discord, to harmony; hunger, to food;
Thirst, to the cooling fountain, sparkling bright;
Sickness, to perfect health; blindness to sight;
Decrepitude, to vigour; woe, to bliss;
All that can waken horror and affright,
To all that gives consummate happiness!
They spurn a changeless world, and madly cling to this!

LXXXVI.

How great their folly ! Greater still their crime !
For, while upon themselves they ruin bring,
By choosing, for their all, the joys of time,
They infringe the rights of Heaven's Eternal King !
He, to deliver them from conscience' sting,
Requires them to be humble ; they are proud !
Thankful ; no grateful offering they bring !
Patient ; their tones of discontent are loud !
Forgiving ; but their wrath frowns like the darkening cloud !

LXXXVII.

He tells them to resist, suppress, subdue
Avarice, ambition, sensual desires ;
To practise whatsoever things are true,
Lovely, of good report ; yet, secret fires,—
Not such as He enkindles, or admires,—
Burn in their bosoms ; oft emitting flame,
Before whose blast peace withers and expires !
Thus, they provoke that great and fearful Name,
Whom none can disregard, and 'scape from endless shame !

LXXXVIII.

'Tis dread of self-denial, for the sake
Of doing good, and honouring Him who died
For guilty man ; 'tis this, that serves to wake
Their opposition ; makes them thrust aside
The terms of mercy ; leads them to abide
In sin and condemnation. They refuse,—
Whatever evils may their course betide,—
Their noble powers and faculties to use
As God Himself requires. Thus, they His rights abuse !

LXXXIX.

And yet, to gain some low and private end,
Some worldly good, as fleeting as the dew,
They can deny themselves; can freely spend
Their time, their wealth, their labour; can pursue
Their object with a vigour ever new,
Though hunger, thirst, disease, cold, heat oppose.
'Mid sufferings many, dangers not a few,
O'er rivers, deserts, mountains capt with snows,
Selfishness oft pursues the path which folly chose!

XC.

Alas! that men should brave such toil and pain,
To gather laurels that, so soon, must fade;
To heap up treasures that are poor and vain,
When most their owner needs effectual aid;
To grasp at pleasures fleeting as the shade
That tells at day's decline of setting sun!
Why all their deathless faculties degrade,
To seek a bliss which scarcely is begun,
When they must leave it all, and find themselves undone?

XCI.

Are there no wreaths immortal; treasures bright,
Boundless, eternal; pleasures pure, serene,
Refreshing, fadeless; scenes of sweet delight;
Landscapes adorned with everlasting green,
Where nothing that annoys is ever seen;
Mansions of glory that resist decay;
Crowns, sceptres, jewels of unfading sheen;
No fount of bliss to drive all grief away?
O yes! but from all these vain mortals love to stray!

XCII.

Many are well aware that they are wrong ;
Grasping at bubbles soon to burst in air ;
Or, by some Siren's music, led along
A path that ends at last in keen despair.
Often they pause, and, roused to anxious care
By threatened danger, seem resolved to take
A safer course, nor farther hazards dare.
Startled by fear, many resolves they make,
Which seem, indeed, most wise, but not too wise to break !

XCIII.

What Conscience whispers, Duty now requires ;
Selfishness whispers, Duty should postpone.
Impelled by restless and intense desires
For earthly bliss no human heart has known ;
Hoping that future deeds will yet atone
For past neglect, they slight each proffer kind,
Each mandate issuing from the Eternal Throne ;
Till rendered obstinate, perverse and blind,
They're left to their own way, and mercy never find.

XCIV.

The artless child, when he beholds the Bow
Painted in beauty on the eastern skies,
Charmed with the sight, seized with the kindling glow
Of deepest admiration, instant tries
To reach the object that allures his eyes ;
But all his efforts, all his speed are vain,
For still the glittering thing before him flies.
How lovely are those tints he hopes to gain !
But all his toils must end in weariness and pain !

XCV.

Such the deception on themselves imposed,
By those who to some future date assign
Duties, whose obligations are disclosed
As binding now, but which they now decline.
Ne'er will the future on their pathway shine ;
It flits before them like the bow in air,
Leaving them short of that advancing line,
Standing on which they promised to repair
The errors of a life which ends in keen despair !

XCVI.

O monstrous folly, thus to sport with death !
To wish to live, and yet resolve to die !
To long for Heaven, and yet permit a breath
Of earth's foul air to sweep its glories by,
Like Autumn leaves when tempest rages high !
To dread despair, and yet its woes to brave,
In spite of bleeding Mercy's thrilling cry !
Who, to find rest, would mount the stormy wave ?
Who, to find life and joy, would make his home the grave ?

XCVII.

What prisoner, in a dungeon, would delay
The happy moment which should give release ?
What traveller lost, defer the dawn of day ?
What weary labourer his task increase ?
What sick man grieve to find his sufferings cease ?
Who that is blind, his blindness would retain ?
Who that is wretched and devoid of peace,
Would longer still in wretchedness remain ?
Is it no blessing now our highest good to gain ?

XCVIII.

'Twere endless to describe the various wiles
By which immortal spirits are ensnared ;
The enticements strong, by which the Foe beguiles
Lost ones to ruin, ne'er to be repaired :
The apologies which impious men have dared,
And still will dare, throughout all future time,
To give for unbelief. Nought will be spared
To accomplish this, in any age or clime.
Men would be free from guilt, yet plunge in deepest crime !

XCIX.

Nor will they always feel disposed to keep
Their opposition to your message kind
Concealed within ! 'Twill often overleap,
Like ravening lion long in chains confined,
All common barriers that control the mind
And sway the heart. 'Twill often madly rend
All ties that man to man in concord bind.
Neighbour will smite his neighbour, friend his friend ;
Hearts, held by kindred bands, will cease in love to blend.

C.

Thousands will hate you for your love to me ;
Deride your arguments, however strong ;
Spurn your advice, however wise it be ;
Treat as a fable, or unmeaning song,
Facts on which angel minds have lingered long ;
Scorn your entreaties and your flowing tears,
As if your very pity did them wrong ;
Appeal by turns to all your hopes and fears,
All that makes death abhorred, and all that life endears.

CI.

They will condemn your motives ; will pervert
Your obvious meaning ; will your acts defame ;
When proof is wanting, boldly will assert
Whate'er can fasten odium on your name,
Or load it with opprobrium and shame ;
Will call you turbulent, seditious, wild
And lawless : more like savage beasts than tame,
With hearts by bigotry and hate defiled,
E'en treatment such as this they'll reckon far too mild.

CII.

Hence, not the tongue alone will they employ
To wreak their sateless vengeance on your head ;
Wherever means more potent to annoy
Await their nod, they often will be led
Fearless on every law of right to tread ;
Will spare no pains your ruin to secure,
Till with your blood their guilty hands are red.
However faithful, then, however pure,
Do not expect to reign, but want and woe endure.

CIII.

Think not on downy couches to repose,
Which to the senses odours sweet reveal ;
A sterner couch awaits you from your foes,
On which extended you will keenly feel
How much of torture hearts composed of steel
Delight to inflict on hearts dissolved in love !
How like the adder, deaf to all appeal,
Are those who dread no terrors from above :
The vulture never spares the meek and harmless dove !

CIV.

Yet, feel no hatred towards them ; no desire
Evil, at all, for evil to return ;
Let nobler principles your souls inspire ;
Treat them with kindness ; they too soon will learn,
That those whose hearts with pride and anger burn
Are only feeding that consuming flame
Which fills with ashes Death's eternal urn.
Your hate their causeless hate can never tame ;
O ! love and pity those exposed to endless shame !

CV.

Your patience, meekness, goodness, tenderness,
Towards those within whose bosoms never dwelt
One kindly feeling, one desire to bless,
One pang of grief for nameless evils dealt,
May cause through grace e'en their hard hearts to melt,
And waken there, ere Mercy drops her plea,
Emotions that before were never felt.
Through you, at length, they may be led to see
Their need of Him who bled and died on Calvary.

CVI.

Faint not, nor be discouraged, while the flame
Of persecution rages. Nobly brave
Poverty, labour, obloquy and shame,
The sword, the scaffold, and the yawning grave.
For he who seeks, from selfish ends, to save
His periled life, shall lose it ; he who dares,
From love of me, to mount the stormy wave
Which threatens ruin, may dismiss his cares,
And leave it all with me to manage his affairs.

CVII.

All power in Heaven and earth, and deepest Hell,
Is wielded now by my resistless hand ;
All beings that in wide creation dwell,
Move at my pleasure, at my bidding stand ;
Atoms minute, as well as systems grand,
Are under my direction and control,
And yield obedience prompt to my command ;
My vast dominion grasps the boundless whole,
Nor overlooks a hair, much less a deathless soul.

CVIII.

Protected from the serpent's deadly bite,
From racks that torture, and from fires that burn,
Rendered immortal in the ceaseless fight,
Till summoned from the conflict to return,
Those who are anxious laurels green to earn,
In strife with you no victories will obtain ;
In spite of all their efforts, they shall learn
That none, without my leave, can give you pain,
Much less can take your life, till called in bliss to reign !

CIX.

You have a glorious errand to fulfill,
With which, indeed, no other errand vies,
The same that led me my own blood to spill.
It is, through grace, to open blinded eyes ;
Wake in cold hearts a love that never dies,
And fill them with intense and pure delight,
And fit them for the raptures of the skies ;
Scatter from earth the shades of moral night,
And all the future clothe in robes of glory bright.

CX.

Hence, till your work of love is fully done,
Your lives are safe from all the assaults of men.
Go, then, and, tireless as the radiant sun,
And fearless of the sword, or lion's den,
Traverse each valley and each mountain glen ;
Each isle, each continent, each rolling sea ;
And this while life shall last ! Pause not till then !
And to all kindreds, wheresoe'er they be,
Publish the glorious terms of pardon full and free.

CXI.

If called to suffer, think what I endured !
If called to die, think how my heart has bled !
In every hour of suffering, be assured
I will be near, to hold your sinking head,
And in your fainting hearts sweet comfort shed !
Think of that bliss unfading and divine,
Which, when your sorrows are for ever fled,
Will be your great reward. Soon will you shine
In an eternal sphere. Bear, then, and not repine !

CXII.

Think of the happiness you will impart
To thousands now involved in guilt and woe !
Through you pure joy will visit many a heart,
Which else no real joy could ever know.
When, through earth's desert, streams of mercy flow,
Whose source exhaustless was your gushing tears ;
Will not your hearts with grateful rapture glow ?
Who would not brave all perils and all fears,
Millions to fill with joy, throughout all coming years ?

CXIII.

Trust not your wisdom, faithfulness, or might,
To crown your toils and wishes with success;
Your utmost efforts will prove useless quite,
Without my Spirit to assist and bless,
To give you consolation in distress,
Light in your darkness, courage in your fear,
And full support when heavy burdens press.
That Spirit I will send. The time is near.
Soon will He come, and make your path of duty clear!

CXIV.

Till He arrive, in Salem make your stay,
Pleading in earnest prayer for His descent;
And when, at length, has come the auspicious day,
Impressed with grateful love for such event,
Exhort at once my murderers to repent.
Indeed, most cruel has their treatment been,
And none deserve more dreadful punishment;
Yet, even they, repenting of their sin,
Shall in their hearts, now hard, find peace and Heaven begin.

CXV.

Thousands, whose hands are red with guiltless blood,
Who sought, by every term of bitter hate
And cruel scorn, poured forth like sweeping flood,
My sorrows on the cross to aggravate,
Shall in deep penitence lament their state;
Shall look on Him, with many bitter tears,
Whom once they doomed to malefactor's fate,
Nor look in vain! Mercy shall greet their ears,
And proffer sweet release from all their guilty fears!

CXVI.

Nor think to limit within Salem's walls,
Or e'en within your own, your native land,
Your work of love. Wherever sin enthralls
The immortal mind, and spreads on every hand
Her gloomy triumphs, go and take your stand,
And there the terms of mercy loud proclaim.
Bid all submit to my supreme command,
And 'scape for ever from remorse and shame.
Who hear, gain Heaven ; who scorn, sink in devouring flame !

CXVII.

Lo ! I am with you while the world remains.
Sooner yon stars, that gem the brow of Night,
And yonder sun, that aye his course maintains,
Shall cease o'er widest realms to pour their light,
And, vanishing for ever from the sight,
Leave vast creation wrapt in midnight gloom—
Withered each joy, blighted each fond delight,
Each hope consigned to the remorseless tomb—
Than this, my word, shall fail ! Trust till the day of doom !

CXVIII.

Sure as my blood has not been shed in vain,
Sure as the promise of my Father, God,
Sure as the throne of Love on which I reign,
So sure my gospel shall be spread abroad,
And the whole world my pardoning grace applaud.
Go, then ; your sorrows shall result in joy ;
Your very chains shall break the oppressor's rod ;
Your stripes, your groans, your tears, shall but destroy
Those very means of ill which Sin and Death employ.

CXIX.

O what a glorious scene now meets my sight !
The clouds that wrapped all climes are rolled away ;
Darkness gives place to clear and changeless light ;
Nations, that long in Death's dark shadow lay,
In dim eclipse without one glimmering ray,
Emerging to the light of Heaven's own sphere,
Celestial beauty, love divine display ;
All forms of sin and error disappear,
And earth is clothed in smiles, through each revolving year.

CXX.

Fields, where stern warriors met in deadly strife,
With hateful passions gleaming in their eyes,
And swept with giant strength the ranks of life,
And piled their bleeding victims to the skies,
Catching sweet music from the groans and cries
And execrations dire that rent the air,
Now drink no blood, and hear no mournful sighs ;
No tones of wrath and terror linger there ;
Floats o'er the peaceful scene the voice of praise and prayer.

CXXI.

Where once the heathen temple reared its dome,
'Neath which were practised foul and bloody rites,
And lust and murder found their constant home,
And every bond which man to man unites,
And every virtue in which Heaven delights,
Were made the sport of cruelty and pride,
The sight of human gore no more affrights ;
But joyous crowds collect from every side,
To throng the Courts of Him who fills creation wide.

CXXII.

Prisons to hold the votaries of crime,
Dungeons to gratify a tyrant's will,
Scaffolds to hurry from the scenes of time
Those who have dared a brother's blood to spill,
Engines contrived with more than Demon skill
To torture Innocence and Truth and Right,
And all that's truly noble crush and kill ;
These objects, now no longer meet the sight,
But such as whisper peace, and waken pure delight.

CXXIII.

Where rugged thorns their pointed branches spread,
The stately fir waves in the freshening gale ;
Where deadly nightshade dared to rear its head,
Sweet odours from the blooming rose exhale ;
Where nettles grew, now grows the lily pale ;
Where gloomy thickets harboured beasts of prey,
Whose dread assaults made e'en the boldest quail,
Fair, smiling fields, laid open to the day,
Their Heaven-descended robes of green and gold display.

CXXIV.

Where once the desert spread its horrid waste,
Scorched by the ceaseless glow of brazen skies—
Showing no fruits to gratify the taste,
Or plants or flowers to please the longing eyes,
Or pure and cooling streams, to give supplies
To the lorn traveller fainting in its wilds—
On every hand fresh bubbling founts arise,
Flowers bloom, trees wave, the ripening harvest smiles,
And music, from the groves, man of his toil beguiles.

CXXV.

Each in his species now finds aye a friend,
Yes, more, a brother, to his heart most dear ;
A sharer of those joys that never end,
A fellow pilgrim to a brighter sphere,
And not an object of distrust or fear.
All modes of circumvention and deceit,
Of fraud and cruelty, now disappear ;
All in sweet fellowship rejoice to meet,
And show their mutual love at the same Master's feet.

CXXVI.

Death, once beheld as Terror's awful king,
Wielding red thunderbolts in either hand,
Is now regarded as a harmless thing,
Or rather, as a member of that band
Who, robed in light, before Jehovah stand,
And pour sweet music on His listening ear ;
Sent oft from Heaven to earth by God's command,
To wipe, for ever, the last gathering tear,
And bear the weeper hence to an eternal sphere.

CXXVII.

O Sorrows of Gethsemane ! O Tears
And Groans and Anguish of the accursed tree !
Now, your divine, your sweet reward appears !
The ransomed earth is from the curse set free,
And raptured hails her year of Jubilee ;
Hosannas now resound from pole to pole ;
Each hill, each vale, each islet of the sea,
Swells the deep tones of triumph as they roll,
And Heaven o'er blood-bought man assumes the full control.

CXXVIII.

Thus spake the Conqueror of Death and Hell.¹
Instant, from Saints and Seraph's clustering round,
More numerous than the pearly drops that swell
The mountain stream, pours forth the joyous sound
Of voice and harp, reaching the depths profound,
Floating far upward to the distant spheres,
And sweeping wide creation's utmost bound;
Each Star remote, that knows no waste from years,
Looking on Olive's brow, the song of triumph hears.

CXXIX.

Sirius hears it, and more brilliant rays
From his vast, changeless orb reveals to sight;
Orion hears it, whose broad belt displays
Gems that are worlds shining intensely bright—
Hears, and on all his train smiles with delight.
Those clustering Myriads, whose radiance blent
Forms a bright path for spirits robed in white,
Hear the sweet tones of harpers, thither sent,
And shed a purer glow o'er all the firmament.

CXXX.

Welcome! they cry, with transport: Welcome, King,
Sole Conqueror, Deliverer, Only Wise,
Benevolent, Omnipotent to bring
Complete salvation! Welcome to the skies!
Welcome from the dark, cheerless tomb to rise,
And sit, for ever, on Thy peerless throne,
The Joy, the Wonder of angelic eyes!
Reign, o'er that Kingdom which is all thine own,
In majesty and love, unrivalled and alone!

CXXXI.

Low in the Garden once we saw Thee bow,
Crushed beneath sorrow's overwhelming load,
And trembled, while the blood-drops from Thy brow,
Forced out by pain, along Thy path were strewed :
We saw Thee, also, toiling up the road
Which led Thy fainting steps to Calvary ;
And, while our hearts with tender pity glowed,
We longed from scorn and pain to set Thee free ;
But nought could quench Thy love ! No, not the shameful
tree !

CXXXII.

Amid the gloom that covered all the sky,
While the earth trembled, and the rocks were rent,
On the dread cross we saw Thee bleed and die,
And greatly wondered why we were not sent
To inflict upon Thy foes dire punishment,
And give Thee sweet release from deadly pain :
And when, at last, the storm its rage had spent,
We saw Thy form, by cruel vengeance slain,
Laid in the tomb, where Death held his triumphant reign.

CXXXIII.

Sent, on love's errand, from the upper skies,
We watched, in silence, round Thy lowly bed,
Nor watched in vain ; with joy we saw Thee rise,
Wearing the crown of victory on Thy head,
While by Thy hand was Death a captive led.
Hail ! Mighty Conqueror of the Powers of Hell !
Thy bitter sorrows are for ever fled !
Let every tongue Thy love with transport tell,
And all in earth and Heaven thy glorious triumph swell !

CXXXIV.

Not to the Garden, or the Cross, we come
To view thy woes, with mingled grief and fear ;
But wait Thy mandate to attend Thee home,
Where neither hate nor woe will e'er appear ;
No look of scorn, no scourge, no piercing spear ;
Where blissful myriads shall before Thee bend,
Cheered by Thy smile through Heaven's eternal year.
Once Thou didst suffer, as the sinner's Friend ;
But now, Thou reign'st o'er all, in glory without end !

CXXXV.

While thus these raptured spirits pour their lays
Of love and homage through the earth and skies,
Filling the universe with notes of praise,
A golden cloud descending meets the eyes
Of all the Apostles, wakening their surprise.
It seems a chariot beautiful and bright ;
And nearer now, o'er Olive's brow, it lies.
The Saviour, slowly rising from their sight,
Enters the golden cloud, and soars to realms of light.

CXXXVI.

Long gazed the fond disciples on the spot
Where last the charming vision met their eye,
Dissolved in love, and all absorbed in thought ;
Seeking, in vain, to penetrate the sky,
And trace their Master to His throne on high.
How long they might have gazed, 'tis hard to say,
Had not two shining Seraphs standing nigh,
From spot so luring turned their eyes away ;
Why seek in vain, they said, to pierce the realms of day !

CXXXVII.

He who now upward speeds to Heaven His flight,
There o'er the universe in love to reign,
Will thus again descend in glory bright,
With saints and hymning angels in His train;
Not to be mocked, and crucified, and slain,
But raise the slumbering nations from the dead,
Receive His friends to bliss, and doom to pain
Those who have spurned the precious blood He shed.
Go, spread His name through earth, and joy shall crown your
head!

CXXXVIII.

So spoke the Seraphs, and on tireless wing,
Swift as the lightning, upward sped their way,
Once more to swell the triumph of their King,
By mingling with that gorgeous array
Which formed His train, once more to make display
Of love and homage to Creation's Head.
Now, on the confines of celestial day,
They move in state, with all their banners spread,
And Heavenly fragrance sweet is on their senses shed!

CXXXIX.

The Gates of Pearl, full beaming on their sight,
Waken new raptures, and aloud they cry:
Ye Gates Eternal, which exclude all night,
All groans and tears, all sin and misery,
Lift up your heads, and be ye lifted high,
Ye Everlasting Doors! Let Glory's King
Enter! Who is He?—voices sweet reply—
Who is this King of Glory? Tidings bring,
That with both tongue and harp we may His triumph sing!

CXL.

The Lord of Hosts! from myriad voices swells;
The Lord of Hosts! Mighty in battle, He!
In Light, in vast Eternity He dwells!
He is the King of Glory! Glory be
To Him alone, from all Heaven's minstrelsy!
Lift up your heads, ye Gates! Be lifted high,
Ye Doors Eternal! Let Creation see
Her King of Glory crowned with victory!
Glory, from countless worlds, Messiah, be to thee!

CXLI.

Now through those emerald skies, whose smile serene
No tempest e'er disturbs, they hold their flight;
While far beneath spread fields of fadeless green,
And roll for ever streams of pure delight;
And yet on these they scarcely fix their sight,
For nobler object charms their wondering eyes;
Their Prince alone now seems divinely bright;
Compared with Him all meaner glory dies.
They gaze, entranced in love and rapture and surprise.

CXLII.

Swift they attend Him to His lofty throne;
There low, in homage deep, before Him bend,
Delighting to ascribe to Him alone,
Glory supreme, dominion without end.
They hail Him as the sinner's matchless Friend,
The Prince of angels, and the Sovereign Lord
Of all Creation, on whose will depend
Both death and life, both sentence and reward.
All cast before His feet their crowns, with one accord!

CXLIH.

Loud as the sound of many waters ; loud
As mighty thunderings, bursting from the sky
Thick curtained by the dark, convolving cloud,
Unnumbered voices in full concert cry,
To which eternal echo gives reply :
O Lamb, once slain, now seated on the Throne
Of glory underived, no more to die !
Reign thou, in might, eternal and alone !
Let Heaven, Earth and Hell, Thy rightful sceptre own !

CXLIV.

Mortals, for whom His precious blood was shed,
Submit to Him, lest He with anger burn,
And hurl red bolts of ruin on your head !
Ye wanderers lost, He waits for your return ;
Will ye His melting love and pity spurn ?
What balm shall soothe you, when on restless bed
Your feeble clay awaits its mournful urn ?
None, if to Him for grace ye ne'er have fled !
His friends, and they alone, from death have nought to dread !

CXLV.

Thou child of sorrow, penitence and prayer,
Dry up those tears that now bedew thine eyes.
Lean on thy Master's faithful bosom. There
Dwells a kind heart of warmest sympathies.
He knows thy trials, hears thy groans and sighs.
Trust in His care, His wisdom, grace and might :
Be patient ; soon blest angels from the skies
Will come, and bear thee to His blissful sight.
Look up, O mourning one ! In Heaven all is Light !

ERRATA.

Page 48, line 16, for " Partridge," read " partridge."

" 51, last line, for " Tehy," read " They."

" 67, line 13 for "mysteries," read " things."

" 73, line 16. for " foe," read " foes."

" 297, lines 16 and 17 should be transposed.

" 320, line 3, for " Hin," read " Him."





YB 13576

M191897

953

R 664
L

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

